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of Ontario  
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**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Thursday 25 October 2001**

**Jedi 25 octobre 2001**

Speaker  
Honourable Gary Carr

Président  
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk  
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Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

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*The House met at 1000.  
Prayers.*

PRIVATE MEMBERS'  
PUBLIC BUSINESS

PREVENTING PARTISAN  
ADVERTISING ACT, 2001

LOI DE 2001 VISANT  
À EMPÊCHER LA PUBLICITÉ  
À CARACTÈRE POLITIQUE

Mr McGuinty moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 107, An Act to end government spending on partisan advertising / Projet de loi 107, Loi mettant fin aux dépenses du gouvernement en matière de publicité à caractère politique.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Pursuant to standing order 96, the member has 10 minutes to make his presentation.

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** The government has asked the working families of Ontario to make do with less education, to make do with less health care, to make do with less environmental protection, but the government has done nothing to curb its own voracious appetite for spending millions of tax dollars on self-serving, partisan advertising.

Clearly, the government has broken faith with the hard-working families of Ontario, and it has broken its own advertising rules. I direct your attention to a section of a document titled Advertising and Creative Services Directive, dated July 1998, and published by this government's Management Board. This document specifically forbids naming ministers, including the first minister, the Premier, in government advertising of any kind.

The government breaks its own rules and it does so with continuing impunity. Who hasn't seen the dozens of blue and white signs along Ontario highways on which the Premier takes credit for highway construction? These signs cost hundreds of thousands of dollars.

But there's more, much more. Millions of dollars have been spent to mail colour brochures with the Premier's name and picture to the homes of Ontario's hard-working families. Millions of dollars have been spent on television ads that play on the airwaves of this province and do nothing but attempt to convince working families, with their own money. Maybe this has got to be the ulti-

mate insult to our families' intelligence. This government is trying to spin them with their own money, trying to convince people that they're doing a good job.

It seems to me that good policy speak for itself. You don't need to spin people and tell them you're doing good work for them. Let the policy speak for itself.

I have raised this issue time and time again in this Legislature, as have many of my colleagues, but the government continues to waste millions of dollars on blatant partisan advertising. We have been tracking the millions that have been poured down the drain on partisan advertising. Using the freedom of information act, we have uncovered what the government does not want our working families here in Ontario to know.

From the time it came to office until April 2000—we haven't been able to collect figures since then, but from 1995 until April 2000, this government has spent \$234.8 million of tax money on partisan advertising. Again, I find that very insulting to the intelligence of our families, trying to spin them with their very own money. Once again in this matter, as in many others, this government is making the wrong choices for working families. Ontario's working families know that \$235 million could have been used for much better purposes.

Part of that \$235 million could have been used to rehire the nurses this government fired. We've got the fewest nurses per capita in the country right here in Ontario. Part of that \$235 million could have been used to reopen hospital beds that are in short supply today, allowing us to have the beds available that we will need to properly deal with an emergency. When it comes to hospital beds per capita here in the country, we come next to last. We're just one step ahead of Yukon.

Hospital occupancy rates stand at 93% across the province and 97% right here in the greater Toronto area. The government has closed so many beds that we barely have the capacity to deal with a bus crash, let alone a real emergency. Part of that \$235 million could be used to reopen some of those beds so that they're available when we need them.

Part of that \$235 million could have been used to reopen vital health services, such as the pediatric burn unit at the London Health Sciences Centre and maybe the pediatric cardiac unit at the same hospital. Those are being closed in London because this government says it doesn't have enough money to keep them open, forcing the children of southwestern Ontario's working families to travel elsewhere for treatment.

Part of that \$235 million could have been put into home care. That's where the waiting lists are on the rise,

and these are our parents and our grandparents. These are people who are going without care in their homes, the kind of care we would argue in our party that we owe our parents and our grandparents.

Part of that \$235 million could have been used to boost our security in the wake of the terrible events of September 11. We could use part of that money to make sure our communities have emergency plans in place, to make sure we have enough firefighters and to make sure we have enough police. I think our families would believe that would be a good use of that money.

Part of that \$235 million could be used to rehire the five biohazard scientists who were fired by the Minister of Health, scientists who, together, had 150 years of expertise among them. These people were experts in bioterrorism and the West Nile virus. One of those scientists actually developed a test that was used in connection with the particular form of E coli that caused the tragedy in Walkerton. That's how valuable these people are to us. It seems to me we need these people now more than ever.

Part of that \$235 million could be used to improve our education system. Kids are going without textbooks. Class sizes are too big. The government complains our kids are not meeting the literacy standards. How about investing in books for our libraries? It seems to me that our families would embrace that kind of investment, as opposed to this waste of money that they've been putting this money into.

Part of that \$235 million could be used to rehire the environmental officers this government fired. That would help us ensure that no family in Ontario loses a son or a daughter, a mother or a father, a grandfather or a grandmother, the way seven families in Walkerton did simply by drinking the water that came from their taps.

This government is addicted to partisan advertising. We believe on this side of the House that it's time for an intervention, and we're here to help the government because it seems to be incapable of helping itself. That's why I've introduced this bill.

#### 1010

My bill would make it the law of the land that the government can use advertising to inform the public about public services such as immunization programs. They could also use advertising to discourage the public from certain forms of social behaviour, like drinking and driving. But it would make it illegal for the government to inflict blatantly partisan advertising on the working families of Ontario.

It would make it illegal to use government advertising to try to create a positive impression of the government. It would make it illegal for this government to use tax dollars collected from Ontario's working families and use their own money against them, to try to convince them the government is doing a good job.

Again, I say good policy speaks for itself. You don't have to spin people and try to convince them the government is doing a good job. People know whether or not a government is doing a good job.

My bill would make it illegal to use advertising to try to create a negative impression of people or groups that are critical of the government.

My bill would make it illegal to promote the image of the Premier or a cabinet minister. That means no more road signs, no more brochures, no more newspaper ads and no more television spots with the name or the smiling face of the Premier of the day beaming down from on high on all of us.

My bill would make it the responsibility of the Provincial Auditor to decide whether ads not yet made public meet the legal standard, and he would also have the responsibility to review complaints made about ads already made public and, if necessary, to hold an inquiry.

An important feature of my bill would make it the law that each and every government ad must include a prominent notice reminding taxpayers who paid for the ads. That means every ad would have to state clearly and state plainly "paid for by the taxpayers of Ontario."

My bill spells out what every government should know. Every government should know that it must not abuse the public trust and use hundreds of millions of tax dollars to convince the working families of Ontario that it's doing a good job.

Sadly, this government has abused that trust time and time again. This government has broken its own guidelines time and time again. Now I want to make it the law. I want to make it the law of the land that government spending on partisan advertising is forbidden.

My bill would make it the law of the land that partisan advertising, bought by the government and paid for with tax dollars, is never again inflicted on the working families of Ontario.

Partisan government advertising is a disease, and I have the cure. My bill is the cure.

I urge all members of this House to support my bill, but I particularly urge those who see themselves as would-be premiers. I think the public will be looking to them when it comes to this very important matter as to where their values lie, where their priorities lie, as to whether they're on the side of government advertising or on the side of working families.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** It's a pleasure to speak this morning on behalf of our caucus.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Dunlop:** I tried to be polite and listen to Mr McGuinty's remarks and I wish you'd do the same, member from South Park.

The Liberals have not done their homework on this bill. Obviously, they haven't. They have no interest in implementing measures which truly hold the government accountable to the people of Ontario. I would have thought that if they had started anywhere, they would have looked at partisan advertising from their colleagues in Ottawa.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Sarnia-Lambton, come to order.

**Mr Dunlop:** It's very interesting to watch this. I've watched: even after the writ was dropped in the federal election last year, partisan advertising continued in the federal government.

Compare this to a government that has implemented the sunshine bill, the Taxpayer Protection Act and the Balanced Budget Act. I think the contrast is striking. Actions do speak louder than words.

This bill is unnecessary. According to the text of the bill, the Provincial Auditor would be responsible to judge whether or not the government has violated the criteria set out in the bill, preventing partisan political advertising. To begin with, there is a problem with the lack of definition over what constitutes advertising. This is a huge problem. I would assume this would cover TV spots and newspaper spreads. Might it also include direct mailings to people across Ontario, to constituents? What about Web sites, letterhead and business cards?

*Interjection.*

**Mr Dunlop:** What about it? You're right.

If the Liberals are so interested in eliminating taxpayer dollars being spent on partisan political ads, why don't they stand up and tell us about what they're doing in their own party? All members will know that they are allocated a global budget and they can use that budget to publish householders for their constituents. These are legitimate publications; we all print them. They are a valuable way for us to communicate with people in our ridings. But there is no real oversight on how money is spent in terms of content. It can contain names of members, certainly faces, and it can support initiatives by the government or it can slam the government, and that's obviously done in some of your householders.

Would the Liberals be willing to have some sort of oversight body to verify these publications to ensure that they are spending taxpayer dollars in a non-partisan manner? Would that be included in the bill?

This might seem to be taking it to extremes, but without a clear definition it makes it impossible for the auditor, as in this case it may be, to tell what the Legislature meant with the bill. If passed, this would do no more than to muddy the waters surrounding the issue.

In addition, the bill would place an inappropriate burden on the office of the auditor. The auditor has no traditional experience in this area. Auditors typically have experience in tracing dollars and cents and, in the end, determining whether or not the people of Ontario have received value for their dollar. They also have a wide range of skills in looking at business plans and business cases to see if ministries and agencies did their homework in looking forward and doing the best with their resources. What auditors do not have experience in is detailed analysis of marketing and communication plans and whether one can reasonably be expected to get the intended result with an initiative. This could have a serious impact on decisions that would come from the auditor's office.

We all have a vested interest in ensuring that decisions that flow from whatever oversight body controls ads are made in a consistent manner.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. I can't maintain order in this House without gypping the speaker of his time. If you would like a last warning, consider that given now.

**Mr Dunlop:** It does no good for decisions, and hence policy, to meander and weave along without some coherent structure for analysis. We are then left with a piece of the puzzle that has no logical fit with the rest of the organization. This means more inflated bureaucracies and new red tape, and of course our government is trying to eliminate red tape. Compare this to the Advertising Review Board, which has real experience and expertise in the advertising and marketing field. It has the traditional ability to evaluate all facets of an advertising plan, and analyze and make recommendations and decisions as to appropriateness and cost-effectiveness of an advertisement. If the Liberals like this approach so much, why didn't they pass such a bill when they were in power?

Typically, the parties across the way tell you that we spend millions in advertising. Not surprisingly, they fail to tell you how much they spent on advertising when they were in government. So let's do some of the numbers. If you adjust for inflation, the Liberals spent \$355 million and the NDP \$350 million in the Peterson and Rae jurisdictions. Why doesn't Mr McGuinty stand in his place and tell us what he thinks the David Peterson government should have done with the hundreds of millions that it spent on advertising? Maybe balance the budget? Maybe avoid higher taxes and a mountain of debt that threatened to cripple the economy and a monstrous drag on the economy of this province?

Mr Speaker, thank you for allowing me this time this morning.

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West):** I'm very happy to address this bill from my leader, Dalton McGuinty, who for a long time now has advanced the notion that government partisan advertising has no place in the Ontario government. We've watched this government since 1995 cut services that we feel are paramount to the civil service and what the general public expects, while at the same time spending foolishly in areas that they can't even defend.

The other day a friend of mine who is a regular hunter called up and left me a voice mail saying, "Can you believe that even in the hunters' magazine Mike Harris has got to splat his picture all over the place?"

**1020**

After many of the MPPs who have apartments here in the Toronto area have been away over the weekend, they come back to find the pile-up of mail through the door, and you just wade through all the garbage sent by the government of Ontario. If, at minimum, it was useful information, that would be one thing, but it is Janet Ecker, the Minister of Education, and the Premier of Ontario talking to parents about the fact that—I don't see it mentioned anywhere that they don't have textbooks if they're a grade 11 student; I don't see any mention of the fact that classrooms are still much larger than the parents ever expected. Yet the only thing you will find is what they

are trumpeting that they have done for the public education system since they've taken over the government.

Truthfully, parents are not stupid. Parents look at this and say, "How much did this thing cost? It's got glossy pages, all fancy. I thought you guys were the tax-cutting guys. I thought you were the wise spenders." Well, that bloom was off that rose a long time ago because the reality is that you have spent money lavishly praising yourselves. I think you're having a hard time finding anyone else out there who's going to praise the work of this Ontario government, because everything, and in particular in the area of health care, that you have done has been done with the biggest mismanagement of all time.

My community is the best example of that. When we hear Dalton McGuinty talk about over \$200 million being spent on partisan advertising, I know in my home community the operating deficit this year alone of Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital is \$17 million. I spent this past season, just before the House resumed, meeting constituents who told me stories about their family member in a hospital bed. Their dinner plate came and went from the hospital room and the patient didn't eat because their teeth were in a glass and there was no one to check that that patient ate. That's what I listened to in my home constituency office.

I listened to them about the adults who've been diapered in their hospital bed because there aren't the nurses to get them to the bathroom in time. So that they don't mess the bed, they diaper these people, who are fully capable of going to the bathroom independently.

Those are the stories I listen to in my constituency office while Dalton McGuinty tells the world that you spent over \$235 million on partisan advertising so that you can tell the hunters of the world what a fabulous job the Premier is doing.

We speak to parents all the time. Just before the House resumed I met with parents who know they don't have the aides their children require to be in the classroom. I've talked to teachers who know they're not able to cope with the numbers of kids in their classroom, who don't have the supports for that teacher to teach properly all the kids in that classroom. Those are the stories I listened to before we got back here when the House resumed at the end of September, and yet I continue to receive through the mailbox slot brochure after brochure with glossy pages of a smiling Mike Harris.

I think all of us recall when they started putting up those big blue signs by the highway, and how many of my Liberal caucus colleagues just about ran off the road to knock those signs into the ditch. I can tell you I came close on several occasions. Instead, what I did in my community was make my own big blue sign and put it by the side of the road. It said, "Here's the Mike Harris government. Hospital cutbacks: we've gone from four to two. Emergency rooms in my community: we've gone from four to two." Now we have people waiting in an emergency room.

I remember sitting in this House and sending a sheet of paper around to all the MPPs: "Eighteen days to go."

Then the next day it said, "Seventeen days to go." Do you know what that was for? That was to warn the Conservative MPPs of how many days to go before we lost yet another emergency room, before we had ambulances literally rolling patients in the gurney down the ramp to get into the emergency room because the remaining hospitals didn't have the ambulance bays to pull the truck into—all of it entirely predictable. And all the while, that brochure keeps coming through the slot of that door, the fancy colour brochure with a smiling Premier.

I drive on the highway every week more than once and see those ridiculous big blue signs that say, "Your tax dollars at work," and I remember the meeting that I just left in my constituency office about adults being diapered in a hospital because we don't have nursing staff. That is what happens in my community. That is the juxtaposition between people who need good government service and the dignity of good health care and then these signs by the side of the road that they dare spend money on, signed by Premier Mike Harris, to tell me that that's the road. Is that because there are so few roads left not downloaded by this government, and the rest are all the responsibility of the municipality? That's what we've had to watch in my community.

You can imagine how galling it is for parents to get that education brochure when their kids come home, knowing they've got to share a textbook because they don't have enough textbooks for the new curriculum imposed by this government. That's the juxtaposition in my community.

Every time we see these ads—God, we've just had the most dramatic event on September 11 that I have seen in my lifetime, and even still, with this world event that shattered the innocence of our country, we have to look at every major newspaper in the nation—at minimum in Ontario—and I've got to turn it open to see that Mike Harris takes out a full-page ad to say what? What kind of action has this government taken? Have they taken action to assist us in Windsor, whose entire community, practically, is bound up by what happens on the trade corridor at Windsor-Detroit, at the Ambassador Bridge or the Windsor tunnel? Instead, I saw hundreds of thousands of dollars spent on a newspaper ad, instead of reviewing what our community really needs: assistance in securing the bridge, assistance in securing the tunnel. You know, they shut down GM world headquarters on September 11, which is right across the river, a mile away, in downtown Detroit. That had a huge impact on Windsor. They shut down the bridge and tunnel immediately, and when things like that happen to Windsor, things stop cold. All of our tourism industry still is staggering under the weight of the September 11 attacks. And what do I see instead? Full-page ads by this government. It is unacceptable, and under a Dalton McGuinty government it will stop.

**Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York):** I allowed myself the opportunity of passing, because I wanted to hear what the Conservatives had to say on this bill. I'm going to stand here to tell you that the NDP will be

supporting the bill put forward by the Liberals. It is an idea whose time has come.

I have listened to the speakers, the two from the Liberals and the one from the Conservatives, and both of them are right in what they say and both of them are wrong in what they say.

Can the Conservatives deny the orgy of spending that has taken place by them over the last number of years? We've done a little research and, just as an example, since June 2000—I'm not going back before that—there was an attack on teachers which cost \$200,000; in July 2000 there was a welfare pamphlet that cost \$782,000; in August 2000 there were Living Legacy TV and newspaper ads, \$1.3 million; in August 2000, a radio ad, "Ottawa Can Afford to Loosen Its Purse Strings," \$300,000; spring of 2000, anti-federal-Liberal health care TV ads, \$5 million; September 2000, an education pamphlet, \$2 million; November 2000, an Economist "Chairman Mike" ad promoting the Premier, \$60,000; December 2000, high school scholarships, \$127,000;

December 2000-January 2001, health care ads for a booklet not yet produced, \$740,000; January 2001, On report, \$1.12 million; January 2001, one-week newspaper campaign to tout Conservative aid to Toronto, \$200,000; January 2001, a leaked submission to cabinet reveals that the Conservatives plan a multi-million-dollar ad campaign promoting provincial parks to counter public concern about lack of protection of the environment; spring 2001, On report, \$1.15 million; March 22, 2001, Tele-health TV ad, nearly \$1 million; August 2001, teacher testing and literacy education ads, \$6 million; October 11, 2001, full-page advertisements in newspapers across Ontario to assure readers of the actions the provincial government is taking, \$1 million.

1030

No one can deny that this money is being spent and how it is being spent. They're spending it. Can the Liberals deny—and I heard what the Conservatives had to say—that the federal Liberals in Ottawa are doing exactly the same thing? Can they even deny that when they were in government they did similar—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Prue:** Please. Can they deny that when they were in government, they did similar things? Can even the NDP deny that when they were in government, they spent money this way? I am not going to stand here and defend any government in the last 20 years, be it Conservative, Liberal or NDP, for the money they spent in promoting their own causes.

What I am standing here to tell you is that this is an idea whose time has come. The time has come for all of us, from all parties in this House, to say we can no longer waste the money that the taxpayers put forward on partisan political ads. The reality is that it produces cynicism; it produces, out there in the public, people who think the government is wasting their money. They believe it is being wasted because they no longer believe the advertisements.

All of us, if you look at the billboards, if you look at the TV, if you look in the media, are bombarded every day with advertisements. Most of us tune them out. Most of us do not believe them. When we do believe them, we laugh about them, we do so only as a joke—I guess something in our subconscious mind. But when you see something that angers you, when you see an ad like the provincial Tories are doing now and which undoubtedly other parties will do in the future if we don't stop it, it produces that cynicism.

You can look in today's paper. There are two telling points on this very topic. One is that the polls the Toronto Board of Education has done show that the public is not fooled by the education ads. They have not been fooled even one iota. Most people do not believe the ads that say everything is wonderful in the schools. In fact, the majority of people know that it is not true.

The second one is an article by Mr Coyle in the Toronto Star in which he outlines, I think really quite well, his distaste and disgust for the money that was spent on educational ads, particularly the little book *On*, and how that money has failed to do what was necessary to produce the appropriate educational results or the public's acceptance of those results.

The money is being wasted. It can be used to far better purpose. The NDP—and Peter Kormos is here now—has a bill which we think is superior to that which is being put forward by the Liberals. It is far stronger. But in the spirit of co-operation and in the spirit to let everyone know that this needs to be done, we are going to support the Liberals' bill, even though we think ours is better. We are going to ask that it go to committee, and we are going to make the necessary adjustments to the bill in committee to make sure that the strongest possible message is sent to the people of Ontario, the strongest possible message that we must curtail the wasteful spending on partisan ads. We must put the money instead into those places that need it: into the schools, into the hospitals, into the environment, into the thousand things that this government should be doing.

In the meantime, we are asking that the members on the opposite side, on the government side of the House, take to heart that this is something that has to be done. No one is blaming you. I do not blame you any more than I blame the previous NDP or Liberal governments. It is a disease that we have all succumbed to, it is something that we must put an end to, and the end must be brought now.

Mr Kormos, I hope, will be speaking later. Yes? Is it appropriate, Mr Speaker, for me to relinquish the rest of the time?

*Interjection.*

**Mr Prue:** Then I think I would do that for him now. He can explain in more detail what his bill would say.

We would ask all members of the House to stop once and for all, to put an end to this partisan bickering and an ongoing problem of government advertising.

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford):** I'm very pleased to rise and join the debate on this bill.

In a democracy, a government has an obligation to not only put forward solid public policy but to effectively communicate with the people of Ontario, in whose name we act. I would say a case in point with respect to the information—they call it advertising—we communicate to the public, for example, is getting a free flu shot, providing information to the public in terms of what the program is about and how to get that flu shot. Certainly that's something the public should know. Also, dealing with Telehealth Ontario, information with respect to providing that program to the public has to be communicated. When you deal with that type of information to the public, they need to know that and they have a right to know it.

Dealing with this bill, the bill is really not an alternative. It's very vague and lacking in detail. You go through the bill and in one part it says "advertising standards," very objective in terms of what they're trying to accomplish here but with no definitions in terms of what they're trying to accomplish.

It says, "The advertising must not have as a significant objective,

"i. fostering in the public a positive impression of the government, or

"ii. fostering in the public a negative impression of a person or entity that is critical of the government."

Then the process that is set out is through the auditor. The auditor becomes an adjudicative body to deal with advertising. What are we trying to accomplish here? I think the bottom line is that when you're dealing with a bill like this, which is terribly weak—obviously the name of it speaks to the reason it's coming forth, partisan in nature—you have to know what you're talking about before you can have a reasonable discourse. This bill fails to define a single word in the title, which is a good indication that it is going to be a weak bill in terms of what we have here.

It talks about "partisan" and just leaves it at that. It says, "The advertising must not be partisan." That's one of the other standards among the six standards they have there.

I think what they're trying to do is to deprive the public of their right to know. This is the process they want to put in place to make sure everything is vetted as to what the public has a right to know. Certainly, looking at their track record and the federal government's track record with respect to communicating with the public, about a year ago the federal Liberal government in Ottawa commissioned a study that showed only 14% of the people found that they received enough information from their government. That's like saying that out of the population of Ontario, all 12 million of us, only 1.7 million people felt they were well informed, roughly the population of the city of Toronto, minus North York and a bit of Scarborough. That's just not acceptable.

I think this is cheap political game. The bottom line is that the information the public has a right to know is being given to them. The public want to know what the government is doing in terms of programs that will

benefit them. They don't want to be straitjacketed by a process of standards that the auditor, whose main focus is to deal with financial matters, not to be an advertising censor, would be dealing with.

I'm going to close. Basically the opposition side should be looking at what they've done in the past and at what they've said. I think the member for Waterloo will deal with that.

1040

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I'm not surprised by the speeches I've heard from the government side, but I am saddened by them, because I think the Thursday morning exercise at private members' public business is one where we, as independent members, can make a judgment and make some changes. All we're getting is a defence of something that is, frankly, indefensible. Regardless of which government you're talking about or what political party, I think you have to put an end to this kind of what I would call partisan advertising, whether it's federal, provincial or municipal.

The Harris government got elected promising to eliminate unnecessary expenditures, and yet we've had over \$235 million spent on what I think any objective observer would see as partisan, self-serving, self-congratulatory advertising. Let me tell you that there is legitimate advertising that can be done. The member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford mentioned, for instance, the flu shot. That's quite legitimate. That's good advertising, good information. When a committee is coming to a community and wants to have public hearings, that's quite legitimate. So there is a role to play in terms of information. I think what objective observers would say about governments, and we're dealing with this government at the present time, is that clearly they abuse public office by blowing millions upon millions of dollars on self-serving advertising.

The Conservative Party has a lot of money to spend, if it wants to, on advertising. It's the richest political party in Canada at the present time. It has been well rewarded by its corporate and wealthy and powerful friends for bringing in policies that benefit them. The Conservative Party has enough, and if they wish to spend that money on advertising, I cannot complain.

We judge governments and people based on what they do when no one is looking or when they can get away with it. Clearly there is a reason you get away with it. The people who own the news media outlets make money from your advertising. When you had the full-page ad in any of the newspapers—this is the Toronto Sun but it was in all the newspapers—they benefit immensely from that. They're struggling, as other people are, in terms of advertising revenue. So television stations, radio stations, newspapers and magazines are not going to devote the attention to this issue that I believe they should, and are not going to be as critical as they should, because it is their bottom line, because they benefit from it.

We've had full-page newspaper ads, we've had ads in magazines, we've had the glossy brochures that show up

at our house, the On magazine that from time to time shows up at our house, all with the Premier's picture in it, all with the message from the Premier, and all paid for by the taxpayers of this province. We even had ads that attacked members of the teaching profession when Bill 60 was at issue. If the Conservative Party wanted to spend money on that, that's quite legitimate. I don't think it's appropriate to use taxpayers' dollars to do so.

Peter Desbarats, who is a professor of journalism, I think a highly respected person, at the University of Western Ontario, wrote a good article on this. He said it's not even so much the amount of money; it's the nature of the advertising we're seeing. Whether it's the federal government or this provincial government or any other jurisdiction, what we're seeing is governments illegitimately using advertising dollars for the purpose of promoting their programs.

Does the Premier have the right to speak in this House? He certainly does. Should he call press conferences and have gatherings of the news media to listen to what he has? Most certainly. Can the government put out press releases? Yes, they can. Can the government put out backgrounders for everybody? Yes, they can. That's quite legitimate; that's how we should communicate. But what we're seeing is an awful abuse of public office. I think we have to see it stopped and this legislation certainly points in that direction.

I've also had a beef with the government over advertising during by-election campaigns. During every one of the by-elections, this government has had a government advertising campaign going. The fear is they would do that even during a general election campaign, again using taxpayers' dollars to promote Conservative Party policies and programs.

The British have a board that is set up to review advertising. I was watching a program called Undercurrents with Wendy Mesley, and it was on government advertising from various jurisdictions. It mentioned that in Britain there was a board that looked at it. I think the rule was, if I'm not mistaken, that if the board said the government was advertising in a partisan nature, then that political party had to pay for those ads instead of the government. They showed this individual, who's quite objective, a person who's not in a particular political party, the Ontario government ads and said, "Would these pass as a non-partisan ad?" He laughed at the ads and said no way, of course, would they.

To me, this government advertising is first of all wasteful of taxpayers' dollars; second, it's unfair because it gives the government an unfair advantage over an opposition. Each member of the Legislature has an opportunity to put out a report to constituents. I haven't done so for a large number of years, but other members have, and that's fine. Both sides of the House have that opportunity. But what we have here is the government stacking the deck in its favour. So it is wasteful, in my view, an abuse of public office and just not right to have this happening.

We as individual members of the Legislature have a chance to put a stop to it. You have an opposition party

leader, Dalton McGuinty, putting this matter forward today. If you pass this bill, then it is incumbent upon any subsequent government, be it Conservative, Liberal, NDP or some other party, to live with that legislation. So we have a good opportunity to do it today. I hope we don't just have the regular government speeches given to members to read into the House, but that members look independently, as individuals, at a real problem that has permeated so many governments over the years, and today right across this nation other places. We have a chance to end this abuse by passing this legislation, and I appeal to members to do so.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** Right off the bat, New Democrats support this legislation. We support it enthusiastically. In fact, our enthusiasm is demonstrated by our bill from before, though subsequent to the Liberal bill, which addresses the same issue in a modestly different way, but that's not a matter for debate right here and now.

Look, I'm dismayed by the comments coming from the government benches. They clearly don't understand what has gone on and what's going on. The litany of references to previous governments and to current governments is not an argument against the bill; it's an argument for the legislation. They indicate how important it is for legislators, who are members of this Assembly, to seize this moment and create some guidelines and standards for government advertising and the use of taxpayers' dollars.

Let's understand the genesis of this whole process. It came from the Provincial Auditor. It's the Provincial Auditor who called upon this government in 1999 by virtue of the recommendation in his annual report. It's the Provincial Auditor who said that guidelines are needed. This does not abolish government advertising. As a matter of fact, it in no way restricts the capacity of this government or any subsequent government to use advertising, to use any medium available to it; it doesn't restrict any government in any way from using those media to convey information that it deems appropriate to the public. It merely establishes guidelines to ensure that once this legislation is passed, this government cannot, nor can any subsequent government, ever abuse the taxpayer funds it has access to in the course of advertising; and it ensures that that advertising will indeed be for the purpose of communicating important information to the public and not for advancing partisan interests.

What's interesting is that the concerns of the auditor were communicated to the Secretary of Cabinet way back in 1998. The Secretary of Cabinet in 1999 expressed appreciation to the Provincial Auditor for his observations about the need for guidelines. But, alas, we've seen nothing from this government, nor from any of its backbenchers. Everybody should be concerned about the use of public funds to advance partisan interests.

Mr Bradley made reference to the capacity of members to publish what we call "householders," pamphlets that are distributed, newsletters, newspaper advertising, whichever format you want to use. Some members use

full-page ads in their local newspaper to replace what would have been historically the door-to-door distribution of these householders. All of us already live under some pretty clear guidelines about what we can and can't include those householders. And there are more than a few members of this Assembly who've not only been chastised but been forced to look to some other sources to subsidize maybe just a portion of that newsletter when that newsletter has crossed the line into partisanship.

**1050**

It's a simple process. It's one that we all accepted. It isn't onerous in terms of the amount of resources required to screen these newsletters. In fact, as we all know, non-partisan staff from the broader bureaucracy are available to us to vet newsletters or portions of newsletters, or communiqués by individual members that are paid for from that member's budget. Staff are available to quickly vet any material and advise us as to whether it crosses the line into partisanship. That's only fair. I accept those guidelines and accept those standards. I advocate those guidelines and standards. I ask government backbenchers today to approve those similar standards because it effects the guideline approach. It's nothing more, nothing less than that.

We in the New Democratic Party indeed have proposed in our bill some guidelines in addition to those contained in the opposition bill. One example, very briefly, is the fact that the government advertising that's paid for with taxpayers' dollars should relate only to matters for which the government of Ontario has direct responsibility. You'll recall the ad in which the province of Ontario took credit for federal funding. We would propose that that guideline be added to legislation which establishes guidelines for government advertising, because quite frankly, that type of advertising, at the very least, is dishonest. Why would any member of this assembly, government or opposition member, want to lend their name or support, even implicitly, to dishonest advertising by the government or by anybody else?

I also ask government backbenchers to consider this. It's regrettable but it's true. This type of legislation is unlikely to come from a government that's in full flight, or in full retreat. This type of legislation is more likely to come from opposition members or opposition parties. That's the nature of the beast. Let's understand this: governments of all levels, of all stripes have become as addicted to government advertising for partisan purposes as they have to the revenues from casinos and other forms of gambling. That observation doesn't make either of them right.

This assembly today has a chance to approve in principle the need for guidelines for the government utilization of taxpayer dollars in the course of engaging in government advertising. I ask this assembly to send this bill to committee. I will be asking the opposition to accept as amendments the additional guidelines contained in the New Democrats' Bill 115.

Let's put this matter to committee. Let's put this matter to the public. There's but an hour available to us

today. Have the courage to put this matter to the public and then determine whether or not you let this bill enter the House for yet a third time.

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre):** Listening to the debate today lends a whole new meaning to saying one thing and doing another. I can't help but be very little impressed by the arguments on the other side.

I'd like to point out that the Liberals had a directive that disallowed the use of ministers' names and faces in advertising, but they ignored that directive. When they were in government, in spite of the directive that they had, a number of their ministers and their Premier put out advertising in contravention of their own directive.

The first one I have here is from the member from St Catharines, Jim Bradley, when he was minister. I have one here from the member for Scarborough-Agincourt, Gerry Phillips, when he was minister. I have another one here from the member from Thunder Bay, Lyn McLeod, when she was minister. I have another one here from the Honourable Alvin Curling, when he was Minister of Housing. And here's another one from David Peterson, when he was the Premier. I have sent copies of these over to Dalton McGuinty—in contravention of their own directive.

The NDP also, very conveniently, repealed a cabinet directive so that they wouldn't be found in contravention of their own directive. Then, after they were done with the advertising, just before they came back to power in 1994, they put it back in. The ones that I have from the NDP are from Howard Hampton, Shelley Martel and Frances Lankin; and I've also provided the NDP with those.

Constantly people in Canada are saying that they do not get enough information from their governments. In fact, recently 14% in Canada indicated that they receive enough information.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Wettlaufer:** I was very quiet when the Liberals were making their arguments, but they won't shut up over there right now. They don't like hearing facts. They like to obfuscate things.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Wettlaufer:** You may have trouble with that word, do you? It's confusion. I realize that you may not be able to understand some of those words, but most of the people over here do.

I do want to point out that in this bill put forward by the Liberal leader there is no definition of "advertisement." There is also no definition of what would constitute partisan advertising. But there is all kinds of room in this bill to provide for regulations. The Liberal leader knows full well that they would be the ones, that cabinet would be the ones who would regulate, and based on their experience, I can tell you that is not the way we would want it done.

Let's take a look at the Liberal experience. First of all, I would say that what they're trying to paint is less than accurate. Did you know that, adjusting for inflation, the Liberals spent an average of 22% more per year on

advertising than this government? The NDP spent 20% more.

The Provincial Auditor, in 1988, criticized the Liberals. He said, "Excessive costs were incurred and taxpayers often did not get proper value for money." The auditor further said the Liberals "wasted" \$30 million worth of taxpayers' money.

Recently, John Downing of the Toronto Sun reminded the Liberals of their lack of credibility when he said, "Provincial Liberals would be more believable if they hadn't done the same when they ruled."

I wonder if the Liberals watch their own federal cousins, who launched a \$90-million public relations fund to get their message heard in non-Liberal areas. I had to laugh when I read that John Downing also said that the federal government "is right up there with the soap giants and auto manufacturers in pitching product." That's federal Liberals too.

I'd like to say what Murray Elston said, "From time to time there is a need to make information available to the public"—

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

The leader of the official opposition has two minutes.

**Mr McGuinty:** I want to begin by thanking my colleagues in the NDP for their supportive comments. I appreciate those. As for the members opposite, I really felt for them, because they've been sent out here with very specific marching orders. They've been asked to defend the indefensible. It is an impossible task and it was embarrassing for me to have to see them do that. I know that had they had the opportunity to express that which was in their hearts, had they had the opportunity to go out and make this argument in a crowded, heated room inside their constituency, something tells me that they would not be particularly well received in making the argument that investing \$235 million in partisan advertising is somehow in the greater public interest.

1100

The members opposite have made reference to the fact that previous governments of all political stripes have advertised in an inappropriate way. You know what? I agree. But it was wrong then and it's wrong now, and we have an opportunity to stop it once and for all. It's as simple as that. That's the crux of the matter. It was wrong then, it's wrong now, and we have before us the opportunity to fix it. If they feel that there are some problems connected with some of the details in the bill, then I would be delighted to move this on to committee and receive friendly amendments so that together we might improve this to the benefit of our working families. That's what it's all about.

The principle here is very, very simple: is it appropriate? We have a very knowledgeable citizenry. We live in the information age. There are 50 million Web sites and 500 TV channels. Is it really appropriate today to invest taxpayer dollars of any amount in partisan political advertising? In no matter what quarter you might happen to visit this question, whether you're talking about busi-

ness, labour, government or our single most important constituency, our working families, I think the answer will be a resounding, "No. It is an inappropriate way to spend money. Instead, fix my health care, fix my education, make sure the kids can trust the water and make sure the air is safe."

**The Speaker:** The time for this ballot item has expired. I will put the question at 12 o'clock

INQUIRY INTO POLICE  
INVESTIGATIONS  
OF SEXUAL ABUSE AGAINST MINORS  
IN THE CORNWALL AREA ACT, 2001  
LOI DE 2001 PRÉVOYANT UNE ENQUÊTE  
SUR LES ENQUÊTES POLICIÈRES  
RELATIVES AUX PLAINTES DE MAUVAIS  
TRAITEMENTS D'ORDRE SEXUEL  
INFLIGÉS À DES MINEURS  
DANS LA RÉGION DE CORNWALL

Mr Guzzo moved second reading of Bill 48, An Act to establish a commission of inquiry to inquire into the investigations by police forces into sexual abuse against minors in the Cornwall area / Projet de loi 48, Loi visant à créer une commission chargée d'enquêter sur les enquêtes menées par des corps de police sur les plaintes de mauvais traitements d'ordre sexuel infligés à des mineurs dans la région de Cornwall.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Pursuant to standing order 95(c)(i), the member has 10 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr Garry J. Guzzo (Ottawa West-Nepean):** This bill basically parallels Bill 103, which was debated in this House a little over a year ago, on October 12, 2000. I have burdened the members of this House with documentation and reports, and I'm at the point now where I almost want to apologize for it. But the background and the history is most important and, notwithstanding the fact that I went through it a year ago, I think it's essential that I repeat and take the first few minutes to go through the history of what has happened and what we're talking about here.

Contrary to what you may have read in a couple of publications, this is not a vendetta, this not an effort to get at anybody. This is a matter of police investigations. There have been two or three police investigations to date. The first one took place in the early 1990s by the Cornwall police department. They did a review of their own procedure and found that there was nothing amiss, notwithstanding the fact that there were no charges laid. They could find no evidence to lay any charges with regard to the sexual abuse of minors in the 25 years preceding that investigation.

When the public refused to accept that opinion, the Ontario Provincial Police were called in and they did a review. In between that time, the Ottawa police force was asked to look at the situation, and it agreed to take a six-month period to investigate. After six days, notwithstand-

ing that they had assigned two officers, they withdrew. The OPP investigation was concluded in late 1994, and on Christmas Eve of 1994, of all days, a press release was issued indicating that there was nothing amiss and no charges were to be laid. A most interesting day to choose to issue a press release—Christmas Eve.

The citizens' group in Cornwall was not satisfied. They took it upon themselves, using their own money, to do an investigation of their own, and they did a thorough investigation and must be commended. As a result of that and the evidence they found, evidence was served upon the Attorney General and the Solicitor General of this province on April 8, 1997—affidavits, statements, documentation, registration slips from a fleabag motel on a pedophile strip in Fort Lauderdale—that confirmed the presence of people who were alleging that they had been abused and had been taken down there to be abused in the company of some very significant people in the Cornwall area. The registration slips confirmed that and were served on the Attorney General and the Solicitor General. As a result of that, Project Truth was then set up.

Miraculously, Project Truth has laid approximately 117 charges against 16 or 17 individuals, all of which charges took place long before 1992 and 1993 and were completely missed by the Cornwall police in their first investigation, completely overlooked when they did a review of their own investigation and completely missed by the OPP in their investigation. Miraculously, when the citizens' group does the work and produces the evidence, 115 charges.

There are some people, myself included, who think there should be another 115 charges against another 15 or 20 people. There's reluctance to proceed on those. We'll deal with that later. The reluctance there is no greater than the reluctance to deal with the first 115 charges.

As a result of Project Truth, we've had some startling evidence. In August of this year it was reported for the fifth time that Project Truth would be wound up. At that time, it was stated there was no evidence of a pedophile ring. I don't know how you define a pedophile ring. But in trials this fall, one individual charged, a Father Lapierre, who was not believed by the court—Mr Justice Lalonde made it very clear: "I don't accept your evidence. I believe the alleged victim but I can't convict because I'm not convinced beyond a shadow of truth."

Father Lapierre said, "I did not abuse any children, let alone this accused. But I was here in the 1960s. I knew it was going on. I heard other priests talking about it." He fingered his own brother, Father Hollis Lapierre; he's dead now. He fingered Father Martin, who was coming up for trial the following week. "But not me." The first time we'd ever had an admission.

The OPP can't find any evidence, no evidence. They didn't say not sufficient evidence, they said there's no evidence. Six judges heard different preliminary hearings and trials and they have all found the evidence of the accused having been passed from probation officer to crown attorney to coroner to priests to judges very credible, but that's not a ring. I don't know how you define a ring.

But that's what Father Lapierre said under oath. The crown attorney said to him, "Did you report it to your bishop? Did you report it to the police?" "No, I didn't do that. That's not my job. I'm a priest."

Father Martin, the next person charged under Project Truth, coming to trial in Cornwall this fall, admitted getting into bed with the accuser. The accuser said he kissed him and fondled him. He said, "No, it's 2 in the morning, the night before a ski trip. I got into bed to comfort him because his grandfather had died five months before." The judge has reserved on that case. We don't know the decision.

But we do know this, that Mr Lawrence, the piano player at the Parkway Inn, testified that Father Lapierre and another priest delivered the accuser—who is now a lawyer in Quebec City, I might add, a very credible individual—14 years of age, to the bar for his last show. They provided liquor to the 14-year-old. That is not denied. And they sent him home with Mr Lawrence. The boy said he serviced Mr Lawrence for three and a half years almost on a weekly basis. Mr Lawrence says, "That's not true. I only had two sexual encounters with him: one at the boathouse that night and another I don't recall when." But he admits to two. He was delivered to the bar at 12:30 in the morning. He had been turned over to Father Lapierre by the coroner and introduced to the coroner by the crown attorney, but there's no ring.

We have the Storr report, which we won't produce. Mr Storr was a senior probation officer in the Cornwall area at the time leading up to this. He was asked to investigate three of his probation officers, which he did and made a report, and the government didn't act on it for some reason. When the probation officers were charged, two of them committed suicide. Both of them left notes.

#### 1110

We have, as I've outlined to you, some other disturbing situations. Sixty-seven weeks after the documentation was served on two government departments, in August 1995, the lead investigator on the streets of Cornwall for Project Truth signed a letter from the citizens' committee when they served him with the documentation they had served on the AG. He took over two hours in front of five witnesses and said, "I've never seen this documentation before. I wasn't aware of it. I didn't know about this witness and that witness." It never got from Orillia down to the streets of Cornwall. Sixty-seven weeks later and he signed the paper, and that letter—I've photocopied it and sent it to you—was published in the Ottawa Sun on St Patrick's Day 1999.

In April 1999, when it was shown to the Premier after he said, "All the evidence is in and no politician, let alone this House"—and you got that message yesterday, I guess—"should be involved in any investigation." They said, "Look, a 33-year veteran of the OPP has signed this letter." His answer, according to the press release in the Sun of April 1—he just turned and walked away.

In addition to this, we have the illegal seizure of the homemade and professional films depicting some of these poor victims being abused by these people. They

were seized illegally and destroyed. They were not returned, as they should be by law, and were destroyed. When you asked the question, as I did of the Attorney General in June, you heard his answer. If you're satisfied with it, I'm wasting my time here.

**Mr John C. Cleary (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh):** I wish I didn't have to rise today to speak on this bill. I wish we lived in a perfect world where this type of abuse never happened. Unfortunately, we don't live in that kind of world, and that's why I want to support Mr Guzzo's bill today.

I have heard from many of my constituents. The presenter first tried to spearhead a public inquiry into the police investigations surrounding allegations of child abuse. Many in the community feel very strongly that the passage of the bill would bring the truth to light and finally allow the community to heal.

The bill is to establish a commission of inquiry into the investigations undertaken by police forces into allegations of sexual abuse against minors in our area. This bill only concerns itself with the police investigations into the claims of sexual abuse. The inquiry would not determine whether individuals are innocent or guilty of perpetrating sexual abuse against children. Innocence or guilt are matters that must be dealt with before the courts.

I have heard from many retired police officers and members of police commissions on this issue. Last year, I presented a petition in this legislature signed by over 12,000 people who supported the previous bill, Bill 103, in an attempt to get the government to establish an inquiry. The people who signed the petition want the air cleared on the issue. It has been hanging over the community for many years, and it's time that the facts and evidence were laid on the table. Conversely, those on the other side of the issue were not able to even muster 100 signatures on their petition asking that the bill not be passed.

Certainly there is evidence that perhaps there was a pedophile ring operating in our area. In the recent Project Truth trial, the defendant admitted that while he had never abused, he knew a ring was operating in eastern Ontario. A public inquiry would serve to find out why, if this ring was operating in the community, the police were not able to find the evidence until Project Truth was launched in the late 1990s.

In the early 1990s an investigation into the sexual abuse of minors began in our area after the police services board received a series of complaints. Local police took the complaints but failed to find any evidence to support the claims and promptly closed the case. In 1994 the provincial police came in to review the investigation the local police had undertaken into the allegations of sexual abuse. That December they announced they had found no evidence. Between December 1994 and 1997 local citizens got involved. As a result of Project Truth, 117 charges have been laid against 15 individuals. One hundred and nine of these charges were alleged to have happened before 1994.

In my 30 years as an elected representative for our part of Ontario, I have never seen an issue that has divided the

community as much as this has. This is not going to die. I know that until it's dealt with, it will not die. I can't even begin to think how heartbreaking it is to see people—victims and their families—in my constituency office and listen to the horror stories of how it has changed their lives. If you heard what I have heard over the years, there is no question that you would support this bill.

I hope you will all support this bill. It is time that the community is given the facts and begins to heal old wounds and look to the future. The issue has indeed divided the community. But I know that all the citizens of our community want the same thing. We want justice done.

**Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York):** I will be very brief on this point. We agree with and will be supporting Mr Guzzo in his call for a public inquiry.

The sexual abuse of children is a problem that is so endemic in this society. It is so long-standing, and it is very hard to root out. We know of other instances where it takes years and years for the truth to finally out, and it appears that this is exactly what is happening in Cornwall.

I was privileged to be on the child abuse committee for Toronto for some three years while I was a municipal councillor. The stories and the tragedies of the families and the victims—and even the tragedies of the perpetrators—should be well known to people. They should find out about what that causes, not only to the victim but to the people who do the abuse and the help they need. We all remember the tragic case of Martin Kruze in Toronto and how that plays itself out even to this day, with his unfortunate suicide and what is happening on the viaduct and what the city of Toronto is attempting to do with that bridge magnet.

Quite frankly, I don't know why anyone would not support the call for a public inquiry. The public needs to be informed. The public needs, through that information, not only to send people who are guilty to jail but to make sure it does not happen again, to educate itself, to educate children and to move forward as a society. I ask everyone to support Mr Guzzo in his attempt, and will be voting so at 12 o'clock.

**Mr Guzzo:** My friend from Cornwall has lived through this and has recounted the historical background, which has been most helpful. I want to deal further with the situation for only a moment.

**1120**

In forwarding the documentation, I included therein a letter that I sent on April 3, 1999, to the then chief of staff of the Premier, Mr McLaughlin, and I outlined there discussions that I had had with the assistant deputy minister of the Attorney General's department, who called me at my home in Florida—I'll make it clear: I did not call him; he called me—and Mr Frechette, who was an acting commissioner of the OPP in charge of criminal investigations. I commend those to you. This is the second time that I've published that letter and those descriptions.

When the then Attorney General, Mr Flaherty, spoke to this issue at the October 12, 2000 debate, he acknowl-

edged my documentation and at no time denied the accuracy of my recollections, and indeed transcripts of those discussions with those two individuals.

I also refer you to page 6 of that letter, the problems faced by Cornwall police officer Perry Dunlop. I think there's a tendency to look upon Mr Dunlop as the only honest cop in Cornwall, and that's a very, very misleading picture. For example, you may not know Mr Cleary was a police officer on the Cornwall force for a period of time. There are numerous and many people who have come forward from that force with assistance and documentation to help this situation. They haven't been, as Mr Dunlop was, prepared to sacrifice their families and their lives, but notwithstanding that, they have attempted to do a very fair and honest job.

In that documentation I referred you to, when they're preparing the case for the police services commission against Mr Dunlop, which was turned down, read what Deputy Chief St Denis has to say about the circumstances, and Sergeant Lortie, the investigating officer—I've outlined their comments; it's from their notes which were filed before the tribunal—and the concerns expressed by Sergeant Brunet. Just one glimpse at the file.

Nobody questions the fact, nobody denies the fact, that \$32,000 was paid over to an individual who was suing on the basis that he would drop his claim of an allegation of criminal conduct against the individual. As a result of that, which is an illegal process, I might add—four lawyers involved, and they're circulating letters amongst themselves and copying our crown attorney and copying the police chief at Cornwall—the \$32,000 is paid over and the criminal charge is dropped.

When it becomes apparent what has happened, because Mr Dunlop takes it, as he must, as he should, to the children's aid society, and the children's aid society have the file and are doing an investigation of the priest who was the individual alleged to have committed the offence, it's apparent that there is another victim. The CAS goes to the Cornwall police and says, "Give us the name of the other victim so we can do a police investigation," and that Cornwall police department and the board of commissioners of the Cornwall police said, "You can't have the other name. We're not going to help you." Just think about that.

As a result, a criminal charge of obstructing justice was laid against one of the four lawyers. The Law Society of Upper Canada laid a complaint against one of the four lawyers—nothing to the other three lawyers; nothing to our crown attorney, who was obviously aware of this breach of the Criminal Code; and nothing to the police chief. Lack of cooperation.

I want to deal with something I didn't do last time. I want to talk to you a bit about some of the victims, because I have interviewed approximately 65 or 70 victims, and I don't believe them all. I think there are a few here who think there might be some money at the end of this and I've been very, very cautious in cross-examining them. The OPP said that they had interviewed almost 1,000 alleged victims under Project Truth, and

they might have, because in that file that was left open at the Leduc hearing, one person, 1,000 pages of evidence, another, 600 pages, against people who have not been charged.

I want to tell you about a 250-pound municipal police officer from north of here who came into my office last spring to talk to me in his tunic. My assistant ushered him in, thinking it was another one of those parking tickets that you forget to pay, you know? The guy wanted to talk to me about Cornwall. He grew up in Cornwall. He broke down and started to cry. The disruption was such that my assistant came in, concerned something was amiss. I don't what she was going to do; she weighed about 98 pounds. I don't know how she was going to help me if I was in any difficulty. I'll never forget; I'll never erase that picture of that officer, the tears streaming down his tunic as he recounted. He has never told his wife and family. I advised him he shouldn't. There's no need.

There are two or three other people, a professional man in this city, not far from here today; same circumstances. There is absolutely no need. There is more than enough evidence if anybody wants to believe it. There's no corroborating evidence. That's difficult, especially a 30-year-old trial, because the corroborating evidence that would link to people, those films illegally seized, never used at trial, should be returned to their rightful owner, were not returned to their rightful owner. They were destroyed. Has anybody charged the police officers with destroying that evidence? No, we don't get around to that. We're too busy with squeegee kids. But I'll tell you that if we had those, it would be a different situation. It is difficult. For people to ruin their lives and ruin their families is not reasonable in light of the people who have come forward.

I want to tell you about one particular person: never told his parents; nice family today; I sat in his living room and I heard his story. On Friday afternoons he was obliged to service one of these people with oral sex. He used to go home and brush his teeth so hard his gums would bleed. He never told his parents, but he told his dentist. The dentist is now dead. But the dentist's widow is alive and she has his file. The dentist wrote to the police chief, wrote to the mayor of Cornwall, wrote to the chair of the Cornwall Police Service; not even an acknowledgement. He wrote to the Attorney General of this province. The response that he got from that Attorney General 27 years ago was, in my opinion, the lowest level to which I have ever seen the administration of justice reduced. It's an embarrassment. Well, maybe up till yesterday. We maybe lowered the barrier another notch yesterday.

Many of these victims have come forward. They were rebuked by the police department. Some very well-meaning cops said, "Go directly to the crown attorney's office; bypass the police. There's obviously a bottleneck here." Nothing happened. The crown attorney ends up being charged with 24 counts; surprise that nothing happened. The coroner, our coroner, charged with 16

counts. The lawyer who acted on the \$32,000 payment for the Archdiocese of Alexandria ends up charged with 16 counts. His explanation at the press conference he held with his client: "I had my client sign the paper. I took the \$32,000 and paid it to the lawyer for the victim, but I never read the document and I didn't know that it was in contravention of the Criminal Code. If I had read it I'd have known, but I didn't read it. I paid over \$32,000 of my client's money and I didn't read it."

There are a lot of things that are very hard to accept and very hard to swallow on this particular matter. Attempting to get to the bottom of it has not been an easy situation. It has not been pleasant for anybody, particularly the member from the area. I commend him for his work.

1130

**Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's):** I want to speak first to the obvious. Because this is a private member's bill, because this is no longer a resolution that arguably would have compelled the Speaker, we are in a situation where, in the event the bill passes, it will be up to the government to decide whether it proceeds to the next step. We know that's the case with every private member's bill, but because of the state of private members' business today in the province of Ontario, the rules under which we operate, we know very well that private members' bills get buried. We know that.

That's not to suggest for a moment that private members' business and private members' hours aren't extremely important. Of course they are. There is enormous democratic value that comes out of this debate, and of course people will have to stand up and take a position. We look forward to seeing the position the government takes. We look forward to the position the executive council takes. Obviously the official opposition is supporting this bill, but we know the government is going to try and bury this bill. We know that.

The Attorney General, the Solicitor General and the House leader are going to have to answer the question: are you going to bring this bill forward? Are we going to shed light on what happened in Cornwall? Are we going to end the continued impugning of the administration of justice in Cornwall, or are we going to continue to bury this horrible chapter in Ontario's history?

The Attorney General rose yesterday to make arguments against the resolution. That was a point of order and I don't want to appeal the point of order in any way. I accept the Speaker's decision and I said that with respect to the propriety of the commission of inquiry. That was not something I spoke to yesterday; it was rather whether the point of order was premature.

That ruling has been made. But it's remarkable that the Attorney General would rise and make arguments with respect to judicial independence prejudiced to defendants, past and present, to strike down and knock out, using a procedural ambush resolution that has been on notice before this House since June 6, an Attorney General who would not rise in his place and speak to the judge-bashing bills that have been brought forward by

the government caucus. Why? Because, we're told, it's private members' business and that private members' business should not be in any way subjected to any vetting by the Attorney General of the day. Yet he stands up and vets this one and we have to ask ourselves, why? I think the answer has to be that the Attorney General, and anyone who is suggesting that we not shed light on this is wrong.

The Attorney General has research, he says, extensive research he cites supporting the position that a commission of inquiry would prejudice defendants or potential defendants. I'm not asking the Attorney General to share the opinion of the crown with us, but it would be appropriate, I think, to share that research with members of this House. Perhaps upon reviewing that we would be able to say, "You know what? Having reviewed this, having seen what the Attorney General has seen—at least what he's able to share with the public—we agree that in fact a commission of inquiry would be out of order."

But I find it hard to believe that would be the case. I find it hard to believe that from time to time a province or the federal government cannot take a close look at the administration of justice to see whether there has been a chapter that needs to be corrected. There obviously have been some famous royal commissions in the past that have done so, the Marshall commission being the most recent and most famous.

We're not here to second-guess the OPP or the crown and Project Truth, but the reality is that the Cornwall Police Service has been impugned. The investigation has been impugned and you cannot tell me that from time to time the province of Ontario cannot look at that, clear its name, shed light on what happened so that we can say, and so that another generation of Ontarians can say, that from east to west and north to south in Ontario, justice is done. We support this inquiry so that justice will be done.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** The walls of this building are lined with the portraits of former members, dating back not just decades but beyond that. They're anonymous now to most observers, perhaps in their obscurity still familiar to a family member, a grandson or a granddaughter. The fact is what while all of us do our best to represent constituents, to perform here as members of the assembly in the way we see fit, there are rare occasions, I put to you, when members of an elected assembly can achieve a standard that is inaccessible to most members because the opportunity never presents itself to them.

I'm saying this obviously to my colleagues on the government backbenches. It's clear the opposition parties support this bill. This member, Mr Guzzo, has with persistence and consistency pursued justice for the victims of sexual abuse in Cornwall and the Cornwall area. There is no denial, there is simply no refutation to the proposition that there are victims and that the victims have survived but through the grace of God and through no contribution or participation by leaders in this province, be they elected leaders or be they persons in positions of authority who call upon us for respect for them.

The member, Mr Guzzo, spoke in this House some time ago now about his recollections as a youngster growing up in the Glebe and his recollections of the contacts he had with young people who had emerged from any number of provincial institutions of the day, training schools.

I spoke to him about that because I responded very viscerally and intimately with that. I too recall, as a youngster, young people in my community, down in Crowland in the south end of Welland, coming back home from St John's, from Uxbridge, from Grandview, who only in the briefest and most intimate moments would dare relate what had happened to them in those institutions, and could only begin to communicate the incredible pain and scarring damage that flowed from the sexual abuse and assaults upon them when they were with persons whom their parents and whom any number of judges and any number of other people in authority thought they should and would be safe with.

The problem is that back then we had nobody to tell. You couldn't tell the police, because quite frankly some the allegations about the sexual violence against these young people involved allegations of violence against, perhaps not police but people in corrections, people in those positions of authority who had a natural affinity with the criminal justice system and were held in, oh, such high regard. There was nobody to go to.

We like to think that times have changed. The victims of the sexual violence, of the rapes of youngsters in Cornwall by people in positions of authority and, oh, such high regard, clearly felt that by the time 1990 had come along there were people you could tell—30 years later. These same victims knew it was important to tell what had happened. It was important to them because they were still incredibly damaged and the only way some of that damage—some of the damage—could be undone would be for the perpetrators, the violators, the criminals, the offenders, to be brought to some justice.

#### 1140

We know the facts, the irrefutable facts. One police investigation, two police investigations; then only after a privately funded and private investigation did we see charges laid on the basis of, yes, reasonable and probable cause, which means more than mere suspicion, which means more than mere rumour, which means more than mere gossip.

The inquiry being called for by this member is to investigate in an effort to understand how police authorities could have failed, if indeed they did fail. And the inquiry being proposed is an incredibly cautious one. It's an incredibly carefully worded guideline. But it's an effort, should it occur, to guarantee that it never happens again.

This is as much about rescuing children 10 years down the road as it is about trying to create some justice for those children of 30 and 40 years ago.

I say to members of the Conservative bench, your colleague Mr Guzzo, who has been a faithful member of his caucus, who has been faithful to his colleagues in that caucus, who has supported you and your leadership, even

from time to time when there may well—I'm merely speculating—have been occasions where he, like maybe some of you, had some doubt about the appropriateness of that support at that point in time, this member is calling out to his caucus colleagues to demonstrate to him some of the same support he's demonstrated for them.

And it is as well an opportunity, one of the rare opportunities that happen here, where one can leave Queen's Park at the end of one's political career, be it by choice or as a result of the choice of the electorate, and be it two years from now or five or 10 or 15 years from now, and reflect on an occasion where one vote truly made a significant difference, not just to the future of a government, not just to the impact of government policy, but to the lives and families of real people, real members of our provincial community who have no place else to go. You see, they've already gone to the police. They went to the police once, they went to the police twice. They've gone to Attorneys General. They've gone to the newspapers. They've gone to the editorial writers. This is their court of last resort.

If you've never felt a responsibility to remove yourself from the fold and the fulfillment of your obligations, not just as an MPP but, please, Speaker, as a human being, as somebody who cares, as somebody who cares about other people, and most poignantly and significantly in this case, as somebody who cares about kids who are buggered and raped and sodomized and have to live with that the rest of their lives—and I put to members that if we don't rise to their defence today, then we will have to live with that for the rest of our lives. It will be one of those occasions where it won't do any good five or 10 years from now to reflect on it and say, "By God, I should have." It doesn't count five and 10 years from now. Now is the time, right now, within the next 30 minutes.

There may well have been some persuasive arguments from the points of view of some of the members of the government backbenches about the propriety or the legality of the inquiry being proposed by Mr Guzzo. I say to you this: let the courts determine, because I have no doubt—I'm not about to suspect that nobody will challenge this inquiry were this Legislature to call for it. I have no doubt there will be people, individuals, persons in authority, there could well be an Attorney General who seeks to quash this inquiry for reasons which will be more apparent to some than to others. But please, do the right thing in your own capacity and let the courts assess the arguments that may well be made subsequent to what happens here at Queen's Park today.

I can live with the court's adjudication on the appropriateness of this inquiry. I tell you that I am confident—as a result of being here now, I don't know, 13 years and witnessing a succession of inquiries and debates about inquiries, going through a succession of governments and all of the arguments made to try to derail inquiries—that, at the end of the day, the courts have inevitably ruled that inquiries are permissible, legitimate and legal, subject to certain constraints, and those constraints already written into the terms of inquiry of this bill.

Furthermore, this bill can go to committee where the Attorney General or any other number of persons, institutions or bodies can make arguments for amendment to the terms of inquiry contained in this bill, if indeed they have objections to it.

People have a chance here and now to stand up and make their mark. People have the chance here and now to recognize the courage of one of their colleagues who has, with zeal and passion, and—let's look it squarely in the face—who, at some significant risk to his political career, has pursued justice for the people of Cornwall. He was criticized when he attempted, quite frankly in my view, to strong-arm the government into calling an inquiring by threatening to name names. He was criticized for that, and rightly so, because that wasn't the place where names should be revealed. But the fact is that in Cornwall there are names being hurled about all over the place, and the innocent names have a right to be cleared as much as the names of the guilty have an obligation to be prosecuted. That's what this inquiry is meant to do. We are compelled to pass this legislation today.

**Mr Bob Wood (London West):** Mr Speaker, I rise to support this bill today. I think that the inquiry it proposes is fair and necessary for the victims, the investigators and the public. I would, however, like to make reference to the fact that this is proceeding as a bill on second reading, rather than as an order of this House for an inquiry.

I think the ruling that you, sir, made yesterday reveals a serious deficiency in our standing orders. This House, by resolution, should be able to order an inquiry, and I invite the support of all members of this House to change the standing orders so that that is possible. Resolutions passed in this House should have more than merely advisory force. I would respectfully suggest to you, sir, and to the House as a whole, that our MPPs cannot do the job and the people can't assess the job they're doing unless we have the ability as a House, without the government's permission, to make inquiries and find facts. I would suggest, sir, that that is fundamental to the function of our democracy, and I invite all members of this House to support a change in the standing orders so that will be possible in the future.

1150

**Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings):** As a 25-year CAS board member, as a foster parent, as a human, I have followed the media reports on these incidents with some interest. The incidents, as described by Mr Guzzo and by the media, are absolutely unbelievable, but that doesn't mean they're not true. I have learned, as most of us have, the hard way that truth is often stranger than fiction. September 11 demonstrated that. There is an equal probability in my mind that it happened or it did not happen.

We have had through the media some inference and some allegations made against some extremely reputable people, and they have not had an opportunity to clear their names. The best thing we can do for those who are accused, those who are victims of a whisper campaign, is hold an inquiry and give them a legal, public opportunity to vindicate themselves if in fact they are not guilty.

On the other hand, for the victims—we're using the word "victims" but no one has declared that they are victims—if they are really, truly victims they have been provided with no opportunity for compensation, they have been provided with no opportunity for counselling, because almost no one has believed in effect that it has happened. We owe it to the victims as much as we owe it to those who have been accused to examine the issue and to determine whether it happened. I cannot picture in my mind any reason whatsoever why we would not hold it.

I am familiar in my own riding with accusations that have been made against people in every part of the spectrum of society. And whether they're the most wealthy person or whether they have nothing, the characteristic of abuse is not tied to an economic group, is not tied to an ethnic group, is not tied to a gender. Any human, unfortunately, sometimes has the capability of doing that abuse. Yet we are wanting to hide our heads in the sand and ignore it.

One piece of knowledge that I am convinced of from my experience with children's aid societies is that there is a greater than average possibility that a victim ultimately becomes an offender without support from society. We're denying it because we don't want to acknowledge that it happened.

Mr Guzzo is obviously convinced of this. He would not be taking the stand he's taking without the utmost sincerity and at some risk to himself in a career viewpoint. He's not asking for convictions, he's not asking for penalties—he's asking for justice. One cannot mount a campaign on why we should not have justice. I am absolutely embarrassed that in this province we would not be prepared to either vindicate the accused or provide support to the victims.

Unfortunately, an example that I'm all too familiar with is the abuse that has taken place at the provincial schools, schools for the deaf. The reaction of this government to that is, "We don't want to talk about it. We don't want to reopen it. We don't want to revisit it. We spent \$8 million; the issue should go away now."

There is too much evidence—which may be rumour, may be innuendo—for us to turn our back to this. There are people walking these streets right now who could re-offend. Statistics indicate that people who abuse, even after going through a program, have approximately a 2% success rate. If indeed there are guilty parties, we owe it to the children, we owe it to the young people of this province, we owe it to the accused, we owe it to the victims. I defy you to find a reason to not support Mr Guzzo's motion.

**The Speaker:** I believe the time has expired. Sorry, there is some time. The member for Etobicoke North.

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North):** I want to commend the member for Ottawa West-Nepean for bringing this matter to light, for shedding some light on a whole series of fundamental questions, many of which, from what I have read—and I have read the material many times over—keep it in darkness. This Legislature, the members of this Legislature, must be accountable to

the people of the province, and if there was ever a moment in the time I've been elected since 1995, today is that time. As the member for Niagara South has mentioned, people are looking for accountability—not just the general public but the people involved from the city of Cornwall.

I shall support fully a public inquiry into this matter, because the history shows, if you look at it, that there is no dispute in our history that there have been public inquiries in the past simultaneously while there were court trials going on of a criminal nature. The argument being made by critics of any party regarding this issue, that you can't separate the two, is purely a myth. It ignores historical reality, particularly in the last 15 years in Ontario and within Nova Scotia within the last seven. So that is not an argument here.

Finally, I want to make a brief remark. As the member for London West has noted, I think yesterday, despite the Speaker's ruling, was a sad day for the life and reality of democracy in this province. I want to put on record my sense of what happened yesterday in the light of what the Speaker's ruling is. It certainly points up the deficiencies that we as members have in this House as they become more limited over the days and years.

**Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex):** I want to rise and put on record my support for Bill 48. I remember the church native schools. I remember Grandview. I remember St John's School in a personal way. I used to visit a hardware store just down the road in Uxbridge almost monthly. I used to think those were bad kids that came down the railway tracks from St John's School to the hardware store, broke in, got some different clothes and made off. And I guess they were bad kids, but they weren't as bad as I thought because they were running away from something much worse.

I believe we risk in this bill condemning those victims, that their court cases may not proceed, for whatever reason. But I think we risk something greater, and that is not making sure there is some justice for those that perpetrated this. I just wanted to put my thoughts on record.

**The Speaker:** The member for Ottawa West-Nepean has two minutes to reply.

**Mr Guzzo:** I'd like to thank the members of the House for their comments and participating in the debate.

I'd like to just deal with two items, if I might, the first one being the purpose and what is to be accomplished from something like this. I said in the debate last year, and I'll say it again: if it's happening in Cornwall, if police investigations can fail to uncover any charges and then as a result of the citizens' work have this happen, uncover this number of charges, it can happen anywhere. It can happen in your riding. It can happen with any police force.

Indeed afterward, when I was asking questions this spring in the House, I mentioned a number of times that I had opened nine new files, some of them frivolous, some of them not so frivolous. One of the ones I opened and referred to the people in this government that I should

refer it to, I must say, was the Sikura file, which is now becoming a very, very serious one. Note the parallel in the Sikura matter: nothing found by the local force, rash judgment, rush to judgment, OPP is called in as a result of some complaints, they can find nothing, individual cop goes and does some homework, now they reopen it. But who do they call in to investigate? The OPP, to investigate themselves, just as we found here. And eyewitnesses there still had not been contacted by either the local police or by the OPP.

The other point I want to make is, three years after the citizens group went to Florida and got copies of the registration slips, the OPP finally went down there. But some VIPs in Cornwall said, "Hey, they might be forgeries." The citizens' group went back with pictures of the individuals. Not only are they good forgeries, but the people who are alleged to do the forgery look remarkably similar to the individuals named. It's a miracle.

PREVENTING PARTISAN  
ADVERTISING ACT, 2001

LOI DE 2001 VISANT  
À EMPÊCHER LA PUBLICITÉ  
À CARACTÈRE POLITIQUE

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** We will deal with ballot item 27 standing in the name of Mr McGuinty.

Mr McGuinty has moved second reading of Bill 107. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

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

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

We will call in the members after I put the question on the next ballot item.

INQUIRY INTO POLICE  
INVESTIGATIONS  
OF SEXUAL ABUSE AGAINST MINORS  
IN THE CORNWALL AREA ACT, 2001  
LOI DE 2001 PRÉVOYANT UNE ENQUÊTE  
SUR LES ENQUÊTES POLICIÈRES  
RELATIVES AUX PLAINTES DE MAUVAIS  
TRAITEMENTS D'ORDRE SEXUEL  
INFLIGÉS À DES MINEURS  
DANS LA RÉGION DE CORNWALL

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Mr Guzzo has moved second reading of Bill 48.

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

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

All those opposed?

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

*The division bells rang from 1201 to 1206.*

PREVENTING PARTISAN  
ADVERTISING ACT, 2001

LOI DE 2001 VISANT  
À EMPÊCHER LA PUBLICITÉ  
À CARACTÈRE POLITIQUE

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing.

**Ayes**

Agostino, Dominic	Dombrowsky, Leona	McMeekin, Ted
Bountrogianni, Marie	Duncan, Dwight	Parsons, Ernie
Bradley, James J.	Gerretsen, John	Patten, Richard
Bryant, Michael	Gravelle, Michael	Peters, Steve
Caplan, David	Hoy, Pat	Phillips, Gerry
Christopherson, David	Kennedy, Gerard	Prue, Michael
Churley, Marilyn	Kormos, Peter	Pupatello, Sandra
Cleary, John C.	Kwinter, Monte	Ramsay, David
Colle, Mike	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sergio, Mario
Cordiano, Joseph	Marchese, Rosario	Smitherman, George
Crozier, Bruce	Martel, Shelley	Sorbara, Greg
Curling, Alvin	McGuinty, Dalton	
Di Cocco, Caroline	McLeod, Lyn	

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise and remain standing.

**Nays**

Arnott, Ted	Johns, Helen	Snobelen, John
Baird, John R.	Johnson, Bert	Sterling, Norman W.
Barrett, Toby	Klees, Frank	Stewart, R. Gary
Chudleigh, Ted	Marland, Margaret	Stockwell, Chris
Cunningham, Dianne	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tascona, Joseph N.
Dunlop, Garfield	Maves, Bart	Tsubouchi, David H.
Ecker, Janet	Miller, Norm	Turnbull, David
Elliott, Brenda	Molinari, Tina R.	Wilson, Jim
Galt, Doug	Munro, Julia	Witmer, Elizabeth
Gill, Raminder	Murdoch, Bill	Wood, Bob
Guzzo, Garry J.	Mushinski, Marilyn	Young, David
Hardeman, Ernie	O'Toole, John	
Hastings, John	Runciman, Robert W.	
Hudak, Tim	Sampson, Rob	

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 37; the nays are 40.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion lost. We will leave 30 seconds for the doors to be open.

INQUIRY INTO POLICE  
INVESTIGATIONS  
OF SEXUAL ABUSE AGAINST MINORS  
IN THE CORNWALL AREA ACT, 2001  
LOI DE 2001 PRÉVOYANT UNE ENQUÊTE  
SUR LES ENQUÊTES POLICIÈRES  
RELATIVES AUX PLAINTES DE MAUVAIS  
TRAITEMENTS D'ORDRE SEXUEL  
INFLIGÉS À DES MINEURS  
DANS LA RÉGION DE CORNWALL

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing.

**Ayes**

Agostino, Dominic	Gerretsen, John	Miller, Norm
Arnott, Ted	Gravelle, Michael	Molinari, Tina R.

Barrett, Toby	Guzzo, Garry J.	Murdoch, Bill
Bountrogianni, Marie	Hardeman, Ernie	O'Toole, John
Bradley, James J.	Hastings, John	Parsons, Ernie
Bryant, Michael	Hoy, Pat	Patten, Richard
Caplan, David	Johnson, Bert	Peters, Steve
Christopherson, David	Kennedy, Gerard	Phillips, Gerry
Chudleigh, Ted	Klees, Frank	Prue, Michael
Churley, Marilyn	Kormos, Peter	Pupatello, Sandra
Cleary, John C.	Kwinter, Monte	Ramsay, David
Colle, Mike	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sergio, Mario
Cordiano, Joseph	Marchese, Rosario	Smitherman, George
Crozier, Bruce	Marland, Margaret	Sorbara, Greg
Curling, Alvin	Martel, Shelley	Stewart, R. Gary
Di Cocco, Caroline	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tascona, Joseph N.
Dombrowsky, Leona	McGuinty, Dalton	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Duncan, Dwight	McLeod, Lyn	Wood, Bob
Galt, Doug	McMeekin, Ted	

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise and remain standing until their name is called.

**Nays**

Baird, John R.	Johns, Helen	Stockwell, Chris
Cunningham, Dianne	Maves, Bart	Tsubouchi, David H.
Dunlop, Garfield	Munro, Julia	Turnbull, David
Ecker, Janet	Mushinski, Marilyn	Wilson, Jim
Elliott, Brenda	Runciman, Robert W.	Witmer, Elizabeth
Gill, Raminder	Sampson, Rob	Young, David
Hudak, Tim	Snobelen, John	

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 56; the nays are 20.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

Pursuant to standing order—

**Mr Guzzo:** I would ask that the bill be referred to the standing committee on general government.

**The Speaker:** Shall the bill be referred to the standing committee on general government? Agreed. It is so ordered.

It now being after 12 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1215 to 1330.*

**MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

**VISUDYNE**

**Mr Monte Kwinter (York Centre):** Wet macular degeneration occurs most often in people over 60 years of age. It is the result of newly forming blood vessels leaking into the eye's retina. This in turn causes reduction or total loss of central vision. The only known treatment is Visudyne.

Ontario seniors who cannot afford to pay for this treatment are faced with the prospect of permanently losing much, if not all, of their eyesight. Health Canada approved Visudyne for treatment on May 31, 2000. The provincial government has yet to approve Visudyne, although the Ministry of Health said its review would be completed eight months ago.

Minister Tony Clement, in his response to my colleague yesterday, said: "The honourable member knows

very well what the process is.... We on this side of the House follow the process.... From our perspective, we are doing everything as it should be done, according to the book.

Yesterday Tony Clement announced that the anthrax drug Cipro will be available on the provincial drug plan for seniors and welfare recipients. Health Canada has yet to approve Cipro for the treatment of anthrax. Tony Clement is quoted as saying: "I think we can take as evidence from Health Canada that they deem Cipro to be safe to be ingested by Ontarians and Canadians by the very fact that they are ordering a million pills. They're signalling to us that it does pass their safety requirements, and that was the only thing that was preventing us from dealing with it on the formulary."

Minister, although, without question, we must be prudent and prepare for any potential bioterrorist attack, there is not one confirmed case of anthrax in Canada. You found it expedient to totally bypass the process, and in fact you didn't even open the book. Surely, when we have a treatment such as Visudyne, you could exercise the same expedience in ensuring that not one senior in Ontario loses their eyesight due to your inaction.

#### HALL OF DISTINCTION BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS

**Mrs Julia Munro (York North):** Last Thursday evening I had the pleasure of speaking to the annual Hall of Distinction Business Excellence Awards, hosted by the Newmarket Chamber of Commerce.

There are four categories. The first award, for extraordinary business achievements, recognizes excellence. It relates to achievement within our community in any of a number of areas: research and development growth, and new market development. This award was given to Microcel Technical Services.

The Bell Canada Technology Award is awarded to a Newmarket business that has demonstrated innovation in the use of technology in the ever-changing communications area. Southlake Regional Health Centre was the recipient of this award.

The award for developing international trade recognizes outstanding achievement in the development of export markets, the acquisition of subsidiary companies in other provinces or nations and the building of working agreements with companies in other nations. Exco Engineering won this award.

The New Business award recognizes a successful and innovative new entrepreneur. The nominee must be at least one year old and cannot have been in existence more than five years. The award was given to Pack Age Inc.

The Founders Award, to honour a lifetime of achievement in Newmarket, was awarded to Slessor Motors.

Congratulations to all those who were nominated and to those businesses that received awards. Small business is the backbone of the Ontario economy.

#### EPIDERMOLYSIS BULLOSA

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park):** I rise in the House today to help create awareness of something that I think most people here aren't knowledgeable of but need to know about.

Epidermolysis bullosa, or EB, is a group of rare and debilitating genetic skin diseases in which the skin and mucous membranes are so sensitive that the slightest touch can cause painful blistering. EB is a lifelong disease that is often present at birth and can cause severe physical, emotional and financial hardships for the affected persons and families. There is no cure for EB and many, if not most, Canadians are unaware the disease exists, since those who suffer from it must avoid the heat of the sun and must seek the comfort of shade.

There is almost a total lack of service and support for those who have to live with this disease every day. People seeking a miracle go to the States or abroad, where governments have started to invest in research into this illness and have attempted to treat its symptoms with procedures such as Apligraf. The parents of these infants often receive very little information, if any, at birth.

Today, I'd like to recognize in the members' gallery one of my constituents, Kevin Campbell, who inherited this disease at birth. Kevin has brought together many Canadians afflicted with EB across Ontario so that they might help each other through their suffering and teach us all about a disease that is too hidden from public view. Kevin is the acting president of EB Canada and the EB Society of the Greater Toronto Area.

I'm proud that EB awareness week is being launched this Saturday, October 27, at an event in my riding of Parkdale-High Park, which members on all sides of the House are invited to attend. I invite you to learn about the disease over the course of this next week, so that the knowledge we have can work toward improving medical and social services for these people and, through research, find a cure.

#### BILL FINLEY

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** This weekend, the county of Northumberland will honour Warden Bill Finley. This banquet is the culmination of a long political career.

In the past year, the warden has spearheaded a number of important initiatives. First and foremost, he has worked closely with my office and the local federal member to promote the need for a county-wide economic development strategy. We have appreciated his support.

Another notable accomplishment under his stewardship is the waste management department's new agreement with CCI Newmarket to compost wet household garbage waste. This initiative has resulted in a Gold Award for the county from the Recycling Council of Ontario.

Even before the tragedy of September 11, the county had been busy updating and modernizing its emergency

response plan. It has also committed to be the lead agency for the Connect Ontario project in our region.

The success of these initiatives is largely due to the leadership of Warden Finley. He is a warm and caring individual who reflects the spirit of Northumberland residents in a very positive way.

Although this list is by no means exhaustive, it is some indication of the commitment Warden Finley has for the betterment of Northumberland county. I ask the members of this House to join with me in recognizing Warden Bill Finley.

#### HOME CARE

**Mr Joseph Cordiano (York South-Weston):** This government refuses to acknowledge that we have a home care crisis in Ontario. CCACs across Ontario face a shortfall of \$175 million. We now have a situation in Ontario where 70-year-olds are forced to look after their elderly parents in their 90s. It's completely unacceptable that this should be the case.

Budgets have been frozen at year 2000 levels. Last week I spoke of the case of Mr Derango, himself a cancer patient, who is now forced to look after his 90-year-old mother. Can you imagine how bad the situation is for these people? I try to impress this upon this government. There are others like the Oddi family. The daughter-in-law has a heart condition and is required to look after an elderly father who is an Alzheimer patient.

This situation is completely unacceptable, and it comes as a direct result of this government's refusal to acknowledge that we are facing a crisis when it comes to home care across Ontario. North York CCAC is facing a \$10-million shortfall, and that immediately impacts on the people I'm referring to.

When is this government going to acknowledge we are facing a crisis and fund CCACs properly?

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West):** I rise to bring again to the attention of the government the damage being caused in our communities—particularly as it relates to inner-city schools—by their underfunding of education.

For a number of years now, we've seen turmoil on the public school side as the local school board agonized over trying to meet your restrictive funding formulas in terms of closing inner-city schools. Allenby is an excellent example of a major loss for our community. Now we're seeing it on the Catholic board side of things. One of the schools in my riding, Christ The King school, is now on the chopping block directly as a result of your underfunding. I want to remind this government of the importance of inner-city schools. They're not just education centres. They're often social centres. It's a place for the kids to go after school. It's a place for adults to go and take continuing education. Many times it's the only

green space in an inner-city area. When you close the school, you lose the social centre of that neighbourhood.

#### 1340

I want to read from a letter I received from a constituent, in the seconds that I have. "I had been involved in the parents' council for many years while my children attended the school. It is a school with not only high standards of education, but a school with a soul. The children at Christ The King are a very unique and special group of children."

It's wrong that our trustees have to worry about whether they can keep this school open. I urge the government: restore proper funding to the education system and stop this turmoil in communities like Hamilton.

#### HALTON ECONOMY

**Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton):** The people of Halton are going to be opting out of the economic slowdown in the coming quarter. Auto parts manufacturer Magna International has recently chosen Halton as the site of its newest subsidiary, a hydroforming plant that will be located in Milton. The hydroforming plant is one that uses high-pressure water to form steel and tubular steel to produce a very high quality truck frame.

Six hundred new jobs that come with this plant will help Halton to maintain its phenomenal economic growth and add to the prosperity enjoyed by those people who already call Halton their home.

There are several companies currently planning new facilities in Halton, and I am confident there will be more announcements like Magna's in the coming months. Many thousands of people are coming to Halton each year. Business is booming. These people have the confidence and faith that accompany any new job or new home. That booming economy has been generated by lower taxes, fair and reasonable labour laws and an emphasis on making Ontario the best jurisdiction in North America to live, work and raise a family.

Of course, these jobs will generate new taxes. In turn, those taxes will help finance health care, build new schools, maintain communities, improve environmental safety and generally improve the quality of life in Halton and across Ontario.

Given the advantages that Halton offers to businesses looking for a place to build or expand, I'm quite confident that Halton and Ontario will continue to attract more business and those people who seek that opportunity.

#### FEDERAL FUNDS

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Once again we hear Mike Harris and his Conservative cohorts whining for more federal money. The real question that has to be asked of the Premier is one that so far, for some unknown reason, he has escaped: Premier Harris, what do you really want the federal money for? The answer is clear: to fund his ill-conceived tax cuts for the rich and, in particular, for his corporate friends and financial sup-

porters. Not a single new penny of expenditure for health care this year is from provincial coffers. In fact, the Harris government has pocketed an extra \$100 million in federal funds for its tax cuts.

When the federal government awarded \$3,000 a year in millennium scholarship money for 35,000 Ontario students, the Harris government cut financial assistance to those students and grabbed \$87.5 million in federal funds.

When the federal government handed over an additional \$15 million this year for early childhood development, the province withdrew its \$15 million and gave it away in tax cuts.

When the feds provided \$150 million more for social assistance, the provincial Conservatives snatched the lion's share for their tax cuts for the wealthy.

When Mike Harris wants to use the level of federal transfers of funds as an excuse to implement two-tiered health care—one for the rich who can afford to pay and one for the rest—ask him why he wants those federal funds. The answer is simple: to pay for his \$2.2-billion tax gift for the corporations.

Use that money, Mike, for health care in Ontario.

#### SAFETY FIRST PROGRAM

**Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** Last Monday, I was honoured to participate in the official launch of the Ontario Provincial Police central region's "safety first" program held at Norwood District High School. I was pleased to be included with Chief Superintendent Dave Wall, along with officials of the OPP and Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board.

The "safety first" program is about teaching senior elementary students all about Internet safety, and includes 11 key points, which I would like to read into the record:

"(1) Computers should be kept in an area of the house where everyone can use them and be seen.

"(2) Ask for an adult's permission to use the Internet.

"(3) Explore the Internet with your parents. Don't be afraid to share with them what you know.

"(4) Blocking programs can be used to increase the safe use of Internet for your child, but these programs should be treated only as part your overall Internet safety program.

"(5) Remember, individuals who you meet on the Internet should be treated as strangers and potentially dangerous until proven differently.

"(6) Tell an adult right away if you find something that makes you uncomfortable or scared.

"(7) Remember, people do not normally give away anything for free. Never agree to meet someone to get something.

"(8) Never arrange to meet someone you met on the Internet.

"(9) Never respond to messages or bulletin items that are rude, obscene, threatening, frighten you or make you feel uncomfortable.

"(10) Never give out personal information such as your name, address, phone numbers or financial information over the Internet.

"(11) Remember, threatening to cause harm to anyone over the Internet is a crime!"

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I seek unanimous consent to introduce a motion to direct the standing committee on general government to consider Mr Guzzo's bill beginning today in committee.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

**Mr Duncan:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I believe you're coming to oral questions, and the ministers whom we have questions for and we were told would be here are not here.

**The Speaker:** It's not really an excuse, but we did finish early, although I hope all members would try to get here early. Some days, as you know, question period can start at a quarter to two, some days it can start later. I'm looking for some guidance from the government members. Government House leader?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** My apologies to the honourable members. There are ministers who will be here. You're quite right, you did start question period a little early, so I do beg the indulgence of the House.

**Mr Duncan:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: If it would make the House leader's job any easier, the associate Minister of Health is the minister we're looking for, and I see her coming in now.

**The Speaker:** Hopefully, all members will watch the TV, and as they see us moving down quickly, they will try and get in as quickly as possible.

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

##### COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS CENTRES

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My questions today are all for the associate minister of health. There's an article in one of today's papers that tells us that Ontario's CCACs are under tremendous pressure as a result of the fact that you have placed a freeze on their funding, and at a time when demand is skyrocketing for their services they feel they have no choice but to make families pay user fees. Madam Minister, do you support user fees for home care?

**Hon Helen Johns (Minister without Portfolio [Health and Long-Term Care]):** I thank the member opposite for the question. He would know, like I know, that I support the highest quality of care that can happen in Ontario.

This government is looking at its community care access centres because we believe there need to be changes to the management of community care access centres. We believe that there need to be changes because

there are people in the province who are not receiving the services they want.

We have gone into Hamilton because we found there were concerns there. When we did an analysis of Hamilton, we found out that there were a number of issues we should all be concerned about as legislators in Ontario and we have entered into a review to ensure that the people of Ontario are receiving the services they need and deserve.

**Mr McGuinty:** Madam Minister, all I needed was a yes or a no. You didn't answer the question, and that tells me you are afraid to admit that your government is in fact very much supportive of user fees when it comes to home care.

You believe that our parents and our grandparents should be paying user fees for home care. Remember now, if you don't feel a sense of obligation to our parents and grandparents, these are the people who raised their families, played by the rules, paid their taxes, and now I feel a sense of responsibility and obligation toward them. If you don't feel that, then maybe you should consider the economic argument as well.

1350

There was a study done by Health Canada. They looked at cuts to homemaking services very specifically. Do you know what they found? They found that when you deprive seniors of homemaking services, seniors are more likely to get sick, they are much more likely to die. The cost to the health care system, on average, was \$4,000 more when we didn't deliver homemaking services to parents and grandparents.

If you don't understand the sense of moral responsibility we have to help our parents and grandparents live out their lives in independence in their home, you should understand the economic argument is also there. So I ask you again, Madam Minister, why do you support user fees?

**Hon Mrs Johns:** Let me be very clear that the only people who are talking about user fees in Canada right now are Senator Kirby, the Liberal senator, and also Chrétien, who has asked Roy Romanow to look at all of the options. We of course will wait for those options to come from Roy Romanow.

But when we talk about CCACs, and the specific CCAC that we're talking about today, let me say that that CCAC moved from \$17 million in 1994-95 up to \$21 million, in that short period of time, and yet they're saying they can't provide services to the people of their area. When we put CCACs together, our goal was to ensure that quality services were being provided to people in every community across Ontario, and it disturbs us greatly when they're not being provided. That's why I've been assigned to ensure that I look at CCACs, so that seniors have the services they need in their community; and hence the review, a proactive approach to making sure we provide quality care in Ontario.

**Mr McGuinty:** The minister says she's disturbed greatly by some of the news that has been pouring out

here. Let me tell you what disturbs us greatly. What disturbs us greatly is that you are underfunding our home care services, and what disturbs us greatly is that you have forced our CCACs to put this proposal before you because they've effectively got a gun to their heads, saying, "The only way we can continue to provide these services is by turning to those people we provide them to and asking them to pay user fees."

Do you know what I think, Madam Minister, if we're going to be perfectly honest here? I think this was a very deliberate strategy on your part. You have frozen funding to our community care access centres. You've left them with no choice whatsoever but to come forward today. Listen, we are going to hold hostage those very people who have had their care entrusted to us and now make them pay user fees. I think that's all part of your strategy. If you think I am wrong, then you can easily disabuse me of this notion. You can stand up now and you can provide reassurance to our parents and our grandparents and all Ontario families, and say you stand against user fees for home care.

**Hon Mrs Johns:** Let me say that I can stand any day and say that I disagree with the Liberal Party and what they're doing to ensure there's health care in Ontario. When you look at Jean Chrétien back in June 2001, he said, "This party stands against user fees," and now he has Roy Romanow out there looking at all options. Jean Chrétien has opened the field and said, "I'm actually interested in user fees. I've seen them in Sweden."

Let me say that this government is committed to providing quality care. We're concerned about the seniors of the province who have been unable to receive services. Everyone out there knows that this government has had a commitment to community care in the CCACs. We have increased the funding by 72% because we believe it's important to have community services. When people like you suggest that we don't have that commitment, you're just plain wrong.

#### DOCTOR SHORTAGE

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is to the same minister. We'll give her an opportunity to see if she might at least in some small way redeem herself.

I believe one of the most important responsibilities that the provincial government has is to make sure our working families have a doctor. That's why I was so concerned about a new report put out by the Ontario College of Family Physicians. They say that Ontario now has the fewest doctors per capita in the country. They say that one out of every five people in Ontario can't get a family doctor. They tell us that it's even worse in rural areas, where one in four can't get a family doctor.

This is your government's achievement. You've had six long years. We now find ourselves in the worst position in comparison to our provincial counterparts. We have the fewest doctors per capita in the country. Why has your government failed our families?

**Hon Helen Johns (Minister without Portfolio [Health and Long-Term Care]):** We all know in this House that if we go back and look at the history, it was in the time between 1990 and 1995 that previous governments chose to reduce the number of doctors who could go through medical school. Since 1995, the Mike Harris government has had a commitment to ensuring that we strengthen the number of doctors we have in the province.

I'd like to just say, "Welcome to our concerns." We've had them for a number of years. As a result of that, we have ensured that we do things to put doctors through, to bring doctors to Ontario, to ensure that we entice them to stay in Ontario. We've had community-sponsored contracts. We've had alternate funding arrangements so that we could ensure that doctors receive the compensation they deserved for being in underserved areas. We have made arrangements so that their tuition fees are taken care of if they go to an underserved area.

This government is committed to ensuring that we have doctors in all areas across the province, and we will continue to do that in the future because we believe there are—

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

**Mr McGuinty:** Madam Minister, I can assure you that talk is cheap and results count. Let me tell you about your results at the end of six and a half very painful years here in Ontario. The facts are that after those years, we now have the fewest number of doctors per capita in the country. When you started, when your government came on the scene back in 1995, we had 85 underserved communities. Today we have more than 110. When you started back in 1995, we were right in the middle of the pack in Canada when it came to the number of doctors per capita. Now we find ourselves at the bottom. During each and every one of the last six years, the number of doctors per capita has decreased on your watch. Everything you have done when it came to ensuring that we have more family doctors in Ontario has failed. That is the result of your government and your mismanagement of our doctor shortage issue.

I ask you again, why have you failed to ensure that our families have access to a family doctor in their community?

**Hon Mrs Johns:** I was at the Ontario Medical Association meeting last night, and they complimented us and the previous minister for the work she had done on ensuring that we moved forward to ensure there was a greater supply of doctors in the province.

Let me just remind you that there are a number of things this government has done. We've created a medical school in the north, which is an important, important event. We also have strengthened our resources in rural Ontario to ensure that we have regionally trained doctors. I can tell you that in Goderich, which is in my area, we're training doctors so that they'll have a strong rural component and education so that they can be assured of staying in our rural communities.

We've done a number of things because we believe it's important to have our own trained doctors here, but on top of that we've gone out and said, "Let's bring more foreign-trained doctors into Ontario because we need that expertise too."

We're working on a number of fronts because we believe that doctors are important, that the quality of care is important. It's a lot more than has ever been done in the past.

**Mr McGuinty:** Again, Madam Minister, talk is cheap, but I happen to believe that results count. You've had six and a half years. You've taken us from a point where we were in the middle of the pack in comparison to other provinces; now we have the fewest doctors per capita. Every single year on your government's watch, we've had fewer and fewer doctors on a per capita basis. When you started on the job—that is, when your government began its term back in 1995—we had 85 underserved communities. Today we have more than 110. Those facts are indisputable. That is your record; those are the results.

I ask you again, why have you failed our families when it comes to making sure that they have a family doctor in their community?

**Hon Mrs Johns:** Let me just say to the member opposite that we all know there is a shortage of doctors all across North America, and globally too.

**1400**

We here are working to ensure that we strengthen our doctor supply. We've done that by looking at bringing foreign-trained doctors into our community. We have looked at strengthening our ability to bring young people through their training as doctors. We've also looked at how we can utilize other health professionals to ensure that they are able to be there; for example, I think of nurse practitioners.

It's important to have the people who are trained to be able to provide the services in each of the communities, and that's what this government is doing. We are strengthening our base of health human resource professionals. Let me say that we will continue to open medical schools, we're continuing to ensure that there's a financial ability for young people to go through and be doctors, because we believe we need doctors in the future and we have a commitment to improving the supply of doctors and a plan that actually moves us to do that.

## PROVINCIAL SALES TAX

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Acting Premier. We want to know why this government and the Liberals are standing in the way of providing the consumers of Ontario with a reduction of sales taxes. You know that the economy is in trouble. You know that consumer confidence is on the wane. We've asked you to reduce the provincial sales tax by 3% and eliminate it on winter clothing and school supplies. Economists say it would provide an immediate jolt to consumer confidence and the economy in general.

Even the government of Quebec is now looking at reducing their sales tax, and even your own newspaper, the Toronto Sun, is calling for a reduction in sales taxes to spur the retail economy. So I ask you, Acting Premier, why are you and the Liberals standing in the way of providing consumers with a much-needed reduction in the sales tax?

**Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** I thank the leader of the third party for that question. It's passing strange. We had in our second budget 65 different tax cuts. I know that the leader of the third party voted against all of those. Welcome to the tax cut bandwagon, finally.

I have to say that, first of all, we on this side believe that tax cuts are more important now than ever. We certainly have been the party of tax cuts in this country. We have been the leader. In fact, because of our efforts I believe the federal Liberals have followed suit, reluctantly, but certainly they have, and now they embrace it well. I believe right now it's very important for us to show the people that we have the leadership to continue to make sure the economy in Ontario is very strong.

Having said that, we believe that the way to do that is through a continuation of personal tax cuts. We stated that at the very start of our mandate. We indicated back in 1995—sorry, I'll continue this later on.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Supplementary?

**Mr Hampton:** Acting Premier, it's got to be lonely out there: you and the McGuinty Liberals against 11 million consumers in Ontario. Peter Dungan, an economist at the University of Toronto, says that your policy of corporate tax cuts is completely off base: you're only helping corporations, not helping consumers. He also points out that your personal income tax cut in a difficult economic time doesn't work. People merely put the money away. They don't go out there and spend it to stimulate the economy.

I quote today's Toronto Sun, your newspaper: "The biggest single thing Ottawa and Queen's Park could do to boost consumer spending would be to remove the GST and PST on all goods and services from now until the New Year." Your own newspaper says that. Why do you and the McGuinty Liberals insist on corporate tax cuts, tax cuts for the well-off, but you're not prepared to reduce the sales tax, the tax that affects ordinary people across Ontario?

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** I must say that I'm a little offended at the statement by the leader of the third party, not so much his speech on the importance of tax cuts—I certainly agree with tax cuts—but clumping us with the McGuinty caucus sort of bothers me somewhat on a very basic level. I must remind the leader of the third party that he did have an opportunity to govern in this province from 1990 to 1995. During that period of time, if I recall, taxes continued to go up. In fact, as late as 1996 the leader of the third party said, "If corporations are not prepared to invest in jobs, then we need to be looking at raising their tax level."

I say to the leader of the third party that when you were in government you tried your approach originally by raising taxes. We had 10,000 jobs exit the province at that time. I welcome you now to the tax-cut bandwagon, but we believe that cutting personal income taxes is the right way to go.

**Mr Hampton:** Acting Premier, over the last four years, we've watched you and the Liberals in Ottawa cut corporate taxes over and over again and cut income taxes for the well-off. But when it comes to the retail sales tax, when we know the retail economy is in trouble, when it comes to the 11 million consumers across Ontario who are feeling a lack of confidence in the economy, you're unwilling to do anything.

I ask you again, what do you and the Liberals have that binds you so much to corporate tax cuts and personal income tax cuts for the well-off that do nothing to help the economy now, and why are you so opposed to reducing the retail sales tax, something that would make a huge difference for modest-income and lower-income families? Why are you so in favour of the wealthy and the well-off?

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** I really appreciate the opportunity to respond. Unfortunately, joining together the McGuinty group and our caucus is like joining water and oil, I guess. However, I do commend you, leader of the third party, on joining us in our view in favour of cutting taxes, but I may remind you that we have gone along the personal income tax cutting route for a reason. Over 800,000 net new jobs have been created in this province as a result. Unemployment in this province is at a very low level and certainly the welfare rolls have fallen. I would hazard a guess that our approach to cutting income taxes is somewhat successful and probably somewhat of a lead for the rest of this country. I thank you for joining the tax-cut bandwagon. We welcome you. There is room on the caboose here, but I must say that I believe our approach is the better approach to have.

#### MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND LONG-TERM CARE STAFF

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is to the Minister of Health, but I think the Acting Premier should go back to dented tuna cans; he did better with that.

Health Minister, one of the internationally recognized scientists your government has indicated you're going to fire was asked in August to do important work on the West Nile virus. You know how serious the West Nile virus is. You know how serious it can be for the public health of our society. In August Dr Lo was told that he was to work on the West Nile virus. Then suddenly your government decides his services are no longer needed, the West Nile virus is no longer a threat, and Dr Lo can be fired by your government. Minister, can you tell the public of Ontario why the West Nile virus is no longer a threat to public health and why you can fire the only respected international scientist who was being assigned to work on that important public health problem?

**Hon Helen Johns (Minister without Portfolio [Health and Long-Term Care]):** The West Nile virus has been in the media over the summertime and the public health departments in the ministry have been monitoring it very closely. I have a great deal of faith in Dr D'Cunha, who is at the head of the public health division of the ministry. He has made a number of recommendations through the public health departments in every county across the province to ensure we're prepared to deal with the West Nile virus in the ensuing year.

Staff is put in place because of their expertise in specific areas, and in many cases those staff are changed because of changing dynamics within different issues. The West Nile virus is being handled by the public health ministry and they're prepared to deal with the issues that are tied into that in the ensuing year.

1410

**Mr Hampton:** Minister, the public health agencies wrote to you last spring urging a mosquito larvae eradication program. You did nothing, and as a result we have seen over 100 birds test positive for this very serious virus, and we know that mosquitoes across southern Ontario are carrying the infection. Now you lay off the one scientist who could bring some expertise to this.

The associations have pointed out that you are really behind in this. So can you tell us, how does firing the one internationally renowned scientist who knows something about the issue bring forward any kind of effective program to protect the people of Ontario?

**Hon Mrs Johns:** I'm actually quite shocked because I can't believe it when the opposition talks about the West Nile virus. This government has taken that threat very seriously and that's why we've acted. The ministry has been actively working with the federal government, Ontario's health units and the University of Guelph in establishing surveillance and prevention programs. Ontario has been engaged in a surveillance program since May 2001, which we heard a lot about in the paper. The public has been informed about the developments that have happened on an ongoing basis.

We've also had surveillance on humans, mosquitoes and dead birds all across the province, and health units have been engaged to make sure that surveillance happens. In surrounding health units, we've reported and collected dead birds and had analyses done of those. Active mosquitoes: surveillance happened over the summer, which included sending mosquitoes to Brock University and to Health Canada.

As you can see, we've been really involved in protecting the people of the province and Dr D'Cunha has done a fabulous job.

#### DISPATCH SERVICES

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Associate Minister of Health. Minister, I would like to bring to your attention a serious

matter that is putting lives at risk in eastern Ontario, especially in the community of Ottawa.

Staff shortages, lack of training and outdated equipment at eastern Ontario's ambulance dispatch centre have been described as an accident waiting to happen. In the early morning of September 28 there was only one dispatcher on duty instead of the normal five. These are all problems that the city of Ottawa is very anxious to grapple with and to resolve, but they can't, because you won't give us responsibility for the dispatch centre.

Notwithstanding many promises during the course of the last two years, you still have yet to transfer responsibility for the dispatch centre to the city of Ottawa. Madam Minister, will you now finally give us responsibility for our dispatch centre?

**Hon Helen Johns (Minister without Portfolio [Health and Long-Term Care]):** I think it goes without saying that everyone in this House is concerned about quality care and ensuring that people across the province receive quality care. That's why over the last number of months the Minister of Health has entered into a comprehensive review of dispatch services in the province to ensure that we're providing dispatch services in the ways that are necessary to provide that quality of care. That comprehensive review is being done in Hamilton. We're expecting that review to be done over the next few months, and we believe that the recommendations that come from that review will give us a good base to be able to move forward and ensure that we have all of the quality services we need, and in this particular case certainly with ambulance communication centres all across the province.

**Mr McGuinty:** Madam Minister, I'll bring you up to speed on this. The fact of the matter is that the former minister herself said this was a good idea to complete the transfer of the dispatch. Your own government's appointee, the Ottawa Transition Board chair, Claude Bennett, confirmed in writing that this was a good idea to complete the transfer of the dispatch.

We have some very significant problems that we would like to tackle. The problem is that we can't do that because in a very real sense we've kind of got two people trying to steer this car and it's dangerous when two people have their hands on the steering wheel. What we're saying is, listen, give us the responsibility, let us tackle these challenges, and let us begin to do so at the earliest possible opportunity.

Your government has made numerous commitments to transfer responsibility over to the city of Ottawa. The editorial in today's Ottawa Citizen reads: "Ambulance Farce Must End." It's time to bring this to an end. It's time to transfer responsibility for the dispatch centre to the city of Ottawa. Madam Minister, why won't you do that today?

**Hon Mrs Johns:** As everyone in this House knows, dispatch centres are very important to us, ensuring that people don't fall through the cracks when they call an ambulance system. It's important for us to make sure we do a comprehensive review, so that someone calling from

one area isn't serviced because they're not doing the dispatch in a specific area.

What we have done, while we're waiting for the review, is set some priorities in place in the Ottawa area to ensure that we're strengthening the system. We have recently sent two trained call-takers, and we're ensuring that the dispatchers are trained in that area and up-to-date in the newest available technologies.

In addition, we have two full-functioning dispatchers who have been acquired through the regular dispatch training program who are also in Ottawa. We take our responsibilities for ensuring that people receive emergency services in the province very carefully. We ensure these services are available to people. When the review is complete, we will know what's best to do for the whole province. Until then, we are strengthening the dispatch centres in Ottawa, we are working to ensure that quality of care is there, and we are doing this comprehensively.

#### ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES LEGISLATION

**Mrs Julia Munro (York North):** My question is for the Minister of Citizenship. You are preparing to introduce in the House an Ontarians with Disabilities Act within the next month. This legislation will fulfill a promise made by the Ontario government and is highly anticipated by persons with disabilities and groups that have lobbied on their behalf.

As you stated clearly in the House last week, contrary to what some critics would have the citizens of Ontario believe, we do have a solid foundation on which to build. The government has demonstrated a sustained commitment to persons with disabilities through its investment of billions of dollars in programs and services to support persons with disabilities.

It is also a fact that many communities around the province have been working hard, in some cases for years, to remove barriers faced by persons with disabilities. Minister, can you update us on the type of action that has been taken by some local municipalities that improves the lives of persons with disabilities?

**Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors):** I want to thank the member for the question. I've shared with this House the work undertaken in the seven months since I've become the minister. I've met with about 100 different individual organizations and municipal leaders and had an opportunity to meet first-hand with this community to discuss their concerns.

What I found most interesting was that we could only find about 15 communities in Ontario where the leadership of the municipal councils had brought them to creating local disability or accessibility advisory committees. They work extremely well. These groups—some have been in operation for many years—have been removing old barriers and preventing new ones from being created.

I want to state publicly that these groups have worked very effectively because they put disabled persons in the

driver's seat, working directly with planners and the building departments in their municipalities.

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Jackson:** I know the members opposite do not want to hear information about the ODA, but this bill will be tabled in the next—

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

**Mrs Munro:** Minister, it is indeed heartening to know that citizens around the province realize that removing barriers for persons with disabilities is a goal we all share and from which we can all benefit.

Can you provide examples of how these advisory committees and partnerships have resulted in changes that have improved the lives and abilities of persons with disabilities and given them the opportunity to fully participate in their communities?

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Jackson:** What I find interesting is that the Liberals opposite, who may have listened to the disabilities community, have failed to make one single promise to the disabilities community. In fact, even the positive models that are occurring in communities like Windsor, Ontario—I was there on Friday and met with over 100 persons with disabilities in Windsor, encouraging them. It was the 20th anniversary of the forming of their advisory committee. These are very powerful instruments for change, and Windsor is a better city for it.

The leadership of Mayor Mike Hurst, Councillor Joyce Zuk, Dean Lebugue, Carolyn Williams—these individuals have been driving reforms in their community. It's a positive model. What I find interesting is that after all the work that the Liberals did, they have been unable to make one clear, consistent promise to the citizens of Ontario with disabilities—not one. You study the problem but you will not make a commitment. This government will honour its commitment—

**The Speaker:** The minister's time is up.

1420

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park):** I have a question for the Minister of Education. Minister, today in the hallways of the Legislature you'll find local leaders of public education from the Ontario public school boards. They're here to give a report card on your government. The minister will hear later on today what individual members have heard: that the quality of education is declining and students are worse off.

In part what we need to hear in this House is why the minister has been so unsuccessful fighting for students, giving resources to boards, such that we have 17 boards now that have to raid their reserves to educate the kids in those communities. We have \$46 million in special education money missing in Ottawa, \$39 million in teaching money missing in Toronto. We have 20 education assistants laid off in the Limestone board.

On your watch, you have allowed local education leaders to have to make do with less and less. You have allowed education funds to be diverted to fund a corporate tax cut.

What the public needs to hear today and what I'm sure the leaders of local education in this province need to hear from you later is, will you fight for resources for the kids of this province?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** I'm pleased to hear that the Liberal Party has reconfirmed yet again their position against tax cuts for Ontario's working families and small businesses.

Secondly, I welcome the school board association officials. I think it's a very wonderful thing that they're doing today, to come and speak to all members of the Legislature. I look forward to continuing to meet with them. As the honourable member should know, I meet on a regular basis with all of our partners in education, and I look forward to further meetings with the school board association.

I'd like to add that the honourable member was saying that certain things are happening on my watch. On my watch, funding for public education has increased every year I've been a minister.

**Mr Kennedy:** Minister, the students and the hard-working local leaders in education deserve better than the myth-making you're putting upon them. They know what's happening in the classrooms across this province, and we hope you're listening and not myth-making when you sit down with them later on today.

A parent survey of Toronto shows that over half of the public believes the quality of education is down because their students are experiencing a lack of textbooks. Queen's University has told you that 50% of our principals are voting in four years with their feet and they're leaving the system in a vote of non-confidence.

I want to ask, will the same minister who supported a private school tax credit to divert money away from the people who are here today, away from their students, stand in the Legislature today and again commit to fight for adequate funds for the students in our schools, to fight for the programs that she's allowed to be taken away? Will you do that, Minister?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** To the honourable member, I know his party was against higher standards in the curriculum, but that is working out better for students. I know the honourable member's party was against student testing to ensure that our students are able to learn what they need to learn in the new curriculum. I know the honourable member's party is against teacher testing to help ensure that all of our teachers are as up-to-date as possible. I know the honourable member was against legislation that made school boards publicly accountable for where they put their money. I know they are against all those things, but they are things that parents and taxpayers wanted. They are things that we agreed to do; we are doing them.

On the funding side, they've heard me say in this Legislature, and I'll say it again, that of course we need

to increase and continue to invest in public education. We've done it every year I've been here. I will continue to push for public education, because we do recognize that it is an important priority. But you don't simply measure how well your education-

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

#### COURT SERVICES IN QUINTE WEST

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** My question is directed to the Attorney General. Minister, for some time there's been a rumour that the provincial court in Quinte West would close. Reports from your ministry indicate that the volume of cases handled in Belleville and Trenton ward is growing and will continue to grow.

It has always been my understanding that people charged with an offence should be tried in their community. This is not possible when courts in rural Ontario are grouped into one central court. Minister, can you assure the people of Quinte West that the present court will remain and will continue to serve the community of Quinte West?

**Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** This is the first question the member has posed in the Legislative Assembly about this issue, Mr Speaker, but I should say to you and to others that this is not the first time he's raised the issue with me. In fact, the member has persistently, articulately and effectively raised this issue with me on behalf of his constituents. There is no greater spokesperson, no greater advocate for the community.

I should say that no decision has been made with reference to the Trenton court. We are continuing to review the matter. We're continuing to look at the situation there. One thing about which I can assure the honourable member and the citizens of that community is that court services will be available for them. How and where they will be available is something we will continue to talk about.

**Mr Galt:** It's my understanding that a judge in the Quinte area is retiring. Apparently you have recently appointed four new judges to the bench in Ontario; however, the Quinte area did not receive one of these appointments. One of the reasons I've heard for the closing of the court in Quinte West is a lack of an adequate number of judges. Minister, can you assure the people of Quinte West that there will indeed be an adequate number of judges to serve that area?

**Hon Mr Young:** As the Liberals across the way may well recall, the system that is in place in this province, a system they brought in some time ago when they were the government, is a system that does not allow the Attorney General to appoint a judge to a particular area because the Attorney General believes there's a vacancy. The vacancy must be identified by the Chief Justice. I will say to the member that there are no vacancies for that area. The Chief Justice has not identified any and thus there is no judge I can put in there. I will tell you

that the process to fill vacancies is one I take very seriously. If that is indeed the problem, I'm certainly prepared to talk to the Chief Justice about it, but it must be the Chief Justice who initiates the process.

#### LINDSAY-OPS LANDFILL SITE

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** To the Minister of the Environment: because of your inaction, the Kawartha Lakes council has reluctantly agreed by one vote to seek a 25-year extension of the Lindsay-Ops landfill site. One of the councillors who supported this motion even went so far as to call it evil. By doing nothing about their waste disposal crisis, you forced them to do something that many know is dangerous. In my dictionary Lindsay-Ops landfill means contaminated drinking water. The landfill is only 500 metres from the Scugog River. How can you let this go ahead after Walkerton? I'm asking you, will you protect the drinking water of these communities by saying no to the extension of the Lindsay-Ops dump?

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of the Environment):** I'd be pleased to review the information the member has, if she would make that available to me.

**Ms Churley:** Minister, I'll be pleased to do that. I take it from your response that you're not aware of the controversy over the expansion of this dump that has been swirling over your head for some time. Your senior staff warned of this crisis over a year ago. On March 14, 2000, they said that 138 of Ontario's landfill sites are nearing capacity and nothing is being done. What's your solution? Your solution is more pollution.

I'm asking you again today, will you do the most common sense thing here and stop this expansion? Will you at least get together with the member for the area, the member for Haliburton-Victoria-Brock, and sit down and meet with these citizens who are very concerned about their drinking water, should this expansion go ahead?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** In response to the question from the member, the member knows full well that we are very committed to protecting health and the environment in Ontario. When it comes to issues such as landfill, the member also knows that local municipal governments are responsible for determining where to dispose of local waste. Our responsibility is to ensure the necessary environmental protection measures are in place once a decision has been made by local government. However, if you have additional information that you feel is necessary to review, I would hope that you would bring it to our attention, and certainly we'll follow up.

1430

#### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale):** My question is for the associate minister of health. Madam Minister, as you may know, in June 1997 the Health Services Restructuring Commission made a directive on the forced merger of Wellesley Central Hospital

with St Michael's Hospital. That's taken place, and the Wellesley is now closed.

You may also know that at that time a directive was issued for the opening of an ambulatory care centre, to be called the Sherbourne Health Centre, to be located on the site of the former central hospital. To date, Madam Minister, progress from your ministry in moving forward on the provision of actual patient care has been negligible.

I'm wondering, Madam Minister, now that the promise has been made, if you can inform me and members of my community when this promise will be kept.

**Hon Helen Johns (Minister without Portfolio [Health and Long-Term Care]):** I'd like to thank the member opposite for the question. I would also like to say that I think the member knows that the Ministry of Health has been working with the community to try and ensure that this moves forward.

There have been a number of things that have happened. The ministry and the Sherbourne Health Centre are now meeting biweekly to ensure that we move this project forward. The taxpayers of the province have contributed some capital money to be able to purchase a site. There are negotiations about the renovations happening within the province, and we hope that there will soon be answers to that. And of course, operating dollars have been set aside for when it does come into full operation.

We have a commitment to this centre, and it will move forward as quickly as the two parties can come to agreement on a number of issues.

**Mr Smitherman:** Madam Minister, I appreciate your answer, but I would argue that on the details, the slow-down is occurring at the side of the ministry. You made a commitment in your answer that there were operational dollars available for the Sherbourne Health Centre. Can you confirm that those dollars are available in this year's budget, and can you give me your assurance that you'll take a personal interest in seeing that the words that you've used in your earlier answer are actually meaningful in the form of delivering actual patient care to my constituents promptly?

**Hon Mrs Johns:** Well, let me say that I have been briefed by the Ministry of Health. They tell me that these facts are true, so I am sure they are.

We have quite a commitment. As you know, this centre is going to be focused on serving various communities: the homeless and the underhoused, the gay and lesbian community, and the mental health groups. On top of this commitment we have made, we also have a commitment to ensure that the former Princess Margaret site becomes a homeless community too where we can use 500 beds to ensure that we help the homeless in the city of Toronto.

#### TAKE OUR KIDS TO WORK DAY

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** My question is to the Minister of Labour. Minister, you know that our government is very supportive of Take Our Kids to Work Day.

In fact, I understand that November 7 marks the eighth year of this initiative.

Minister, last year about 400,000 students visited more than 70,000 workplaces across Canada. The event for grade 9 students in Durham has been very well received by parents, students and indeed business owners. Take Our Kids to Work Day is a great opportunity for high school students to explore a wide range of career choices. I think it's also an outstanding opportunity for a learning experience for employers as well as staff. That's because of the opportunity to meet young men and women who may become employed in the near future.

Employers such as General Motors, Ontario Power Generation and Lakeridge Health support the event with special activities for students. Small- and medium-sized businesses also participate. Business owners such as Tom Mitchell of Old Port Marketing are participating this year.

Minister, what safety precautions are being proposed by your ministry?

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour):** I only had a three-line question there.

Take Our Kids to Work week is obviously going to be a healthy experience and a gratifying one for many children. We all remember the tragic events of last year with respect to the take your children to work week. Since that time, the Learning Partnership has met to determine how it is we can provide a Take Our Kids to Work week that is safe and acceptable in the province of Ontario.

The tragedy has brought home the necessary requirements that are needed to be taken in order to have a safe and happy day for all those kids who go to school. They have made 14 recommendations to the provincial government about what kind of restrictions and authorities we should put in place. We've adopted all 14 of those recommendations, and we hope that when the day comes, it will be a healthy, safe and happy day for those who go. I thank the member for the question.

**Mr O'Toole:** I thank the minister for that very thorough response. Perhaps it wouldn't be a bad idea if you brought your children to follow you around for a day in your very difficult career at the moment.

Obviously, you and the ministry are part of a very considerable effort ensuring the safety of students. That's what I heard you saying; that's what I found most reassuring in your remarks.

To set an example for other employers, what are you as minister personally going to do during the Take Our Kids to Work Day?

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** I intend to bring my son to work that day. It will be great, because I'll get an opportunity to show him how the workplace does work and the effective use of our time that we spend on a daily basis, such as now.

But, to be quite serious, I think we should ask the parents out there, before they actually take their kids to work, to have a conversation with them that's most important. Some workplaces aren't as safe as others, and sometimes we have to make decisions about where and

how those children may move around the workplaces. We know last year a tragedy occurred, and we've tried to learn from it to ensure it doesn't happen again.

But I would like to re-emphasize to all the parents out there that if kids are going to work with them on that day, they've got to be mindful of the place they're going, since they've not been there before, and they've got to be very careful when they do go to work with them.

I want to thank the member for asking the question. I want to tell the members in this House, if they know anyone who's taking their kids to work, to sit down and talk to them before they go, because we must learn from last year's tragedy and ensure it never happens again.

## ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES LEGISLATION

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair):** I have a question for the Minister of Citizenship. Minister, the Ontario Liberal Party, in the fall of 1998, passed a resolution with respect to the Ontarians with Disabilities Act that contained the most clear and unquestionable principles that need to be included in that act—12 principles. Every member of the government caucus who was in the House that day voted in favour of it. The Ontarians with Disabilities Act committee endorsed that; the city of Windsor and its disabilities advisory committee endorsed that; the council of the city of Windsor endorsed that.

Two questions: (1) will your legislation, the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, reflect in their entirety the 12 principles that your caucus voted for in 1998; and (2) subsequent to the introduction of legislation, will you commit today to have public hearings on the legislation itself over and above the consultation that you have quite properly done as minister, not only here in Toronto but throughout Ontario?

**Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors):** I want to thank the honourable member for his question. We have looked at these principles, and that's exactly what they are. One of the principles makes reference to an Ontarians with Disabilities Act having primacy over all other acts in the province of Ontario. There has been some concern expressed from municipal leaders all across Ontario that they did not envisage the fact that legislation would have primacy over, for example, the Municipal Act, the Planning Act or the building code, which deals with a broad range of issues. So, although municipalities, well intended, have publicly stated they support persons with disabilities in our province, they have expressed concern to this government that legislation does not usurp or undermine the authority and the time-honoured role that municipalities have in Ontario. That was also part of my discussions with Mayor Mike Hurst, whom I met with in Windsor on Friday, and it is the official position that AMO has taken as well.

**Mr Duncan:** I think that precisely gives the reason why we need to have public hearings. I agree, Minister, you are wrestling with a number of very difficult issues. I

think the Ontarians with Disabilities Act committee would agree with that.

We would propose to you today, sir, that there be public hearings and that they be held across the province. We all want to see this act passed quickly, but we also want to ensure that persons with disabilities, as well as other stakeholders, have an interest.

You'll be aware that the United States Congress and Senate held extensive public hearings subsequent to the introduction of the Americans with Disabilities Act and received tremendous input.

Will you commit today, first, to full public hearings; second, that those public hearings travel to at least five communities in this province, preferably geographically dispersed; and third, that we can schedule those or begin to schedule them even before introduction of the legislation to allow people with disabilities the proper time to prepare to participate in those very, very important discussions?

1440

**Hon Mr Jackson:** First of all, I want to thank the member opposite. I know he and his caucus have contacted our House leader. Our House leader has had discussions with you about our willingness, once the legislation is tabled, to ensure that there are opportunities in various locations around the province of Ontario in order that the committee of the Legislature is able to conduct appropriate dialogue with citizens with disabilities, with municipal leaders, with stakeholders, with the private sector, with universities, colleges and hospitals—all those sectors that will be affected by the first comprehensive disability act in our country.

So there is a strong willingness on our part to participate in that process. We will work out those details with our House leader, but I look forward to tabling that legislation within a few short weeks. I know I can count on the members opposite to participate in those discussions on a very positive and go-forward basis to ensure that we can bring in Canada's most comprehensive disabilities legislation.

#### ENDANGERED SPECIES

**Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. I understand your ministry works on many fronts to help protect, enhance and restore the habitat and populations of many threatened and vulnerable species here in the province. Minister, can you tell us more about these efforts, and specifically about your ministry's efforts to help the polar bear population in the far north of Ontario?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Natural Resources):** I want to thank the member from Simcoe North for such an excellent question today. In fact, the Ministry of Natural Resources is committed to protecting species at risk in Ontario and is proud to offer significant protection to endangered species and, importantly, their habitats. As a matter of fact, this government last year made an unprecedented financial commitment through Ontario's

Living Legacy of an additional \$2 million for species at risk.

Earlier this year I had an opportunity to see first hand some of the good work our people are doing to monitor the ecology of polar bears in northern Ontario. Mr Speaker, this will be important to you. Polar bears are classified as vulnerable because of their long lifespan and infrequent breeding. I feel, by that definition, Speakers are probably vulnerable too.

Anyway, we think it's very important to gather as much data as we possibly can so that we can learn more about polar bears, more about their habitat and more about changes in a very delicate ecology.

**Mr Dunlop:** Thank you very much for that answer, Minister. I understand that another species, which was wiped out in Ontario in the 1800s, the elk, has actually been brought back and is being restored to its natural range in Ontario by this government. Still, I understand that some people refuse to believe good things are happening in our natural areas, even efforts to bring a species back from non-existence.

A recent editorial in a Toronto newspaper, in an apparent attempt to use current world events to scare people, claimed that restoring elk to Ontario could lead to many frightening diseases, including chronic wasting disease. Minister, can you speak to the truth of this great restoration project and counter some of the silly fearmongering?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** As my colleagues have pointed out, while we've had some great success in recovering the elk herd in Ontario, about which I will say some more, we have done little to recover Ang.

I can say that because of the work of volunteers throughout Ontario in a great number of volunteer organizations, there are now over 400 elk restored to their natural habitat in Ontario. It has been a great victory for those volunteer organizations. We've been proud to work with them.

The article that the member mentioned was wrong in many ways. Let me just point out a few of those. The chronic wasting disease he points to is found only in farmed elk and is not transferred from farm elk to wild elk. Also, as everyone knows and my colleague has pointed out, elk are not a game species in Ontario. So the article was wrong. There is no need to be alarmed about that, and we are very proud of the efforts of volunteers across Ontario in restoring elk.

#### CONTAMINATION IN PORT COLBORNE

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** To the Minister of the Environment—yes, you again. Minister, you know and the people of Port Colborne know that they are surrounded by poisoned soil. What they don't know is how far the contamination has spread into their homes. That's because you won't help them find out because you will not conduct interior tests. You can imagine that they're frightened, and that is totally unacceptable to them. I'm asking you, Minister, will you direct your staff today to go into the homes of the people

of Port Colborne and find out if those people are living in peril?

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of the Environment):** As the member of the third party knows, the Ministry of the Environment has been very actively involved in the Port Colborne area, working with the medical officer of health to ensure everything is done to ensure the public health and safety of the residents of that community. Certainly the district office of health has been leading the way when it comes to ensuring the protection of those individuals.

**Ms Churley:** Minister, my point is exactly that: everything is not being done and I want you to intervene. You are about to issue a report identifying the level of contamination at which cleanup is required outside, but what good is that if you ignore the health threat that may be lurking in people's homes? You understand what's going on here. Winter is coming. Families in the eastside community will be spending more time indoors. We know from the testing they've done themselves, which they paid for themselves because you wouldn't do it, that levels of home contamination are in some cases higher than that outside.

Minister, I am asking you again, will you send your staff immediately to Port Colborne to do the testing inside the homes, especially the sophisticated tests required to identify nickel oxide, which is a proven carcinogen? Residents need to know they're safe, and if they are not, they want something done about it.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** This government has done more to assist the residents of Port Colborne than any previous government. The issue of contamination is not one that has recently become a problem; it is an historical problem. Let's remember that there are two ongoing health reports, one conducted by the MOE, a human health risk assessment on extensive soil sampling; there was also a local MOH health study done to take a look at the short- and long-term health risks associated with the broader nickel contamination in Port Colborne.

The ministry has undertaken additional soil sampling. The local MOH has indicated there is no immediate risk to human health. We are continuing to provide information on a regular basis to the residents. As you know, we will be releasing a report shortly. We are working cooperatively with the local MOH and everything possible has been done to ensure that the health of those residents is protected. That is our number one priority: the health of the residents.

#### MEMBER FOR SCARBOROUGH-ROUGE RIVER

**Mr Mario Sergio (York West):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: From time to time we recognize guests coming to the House. Today I'd like to rise on a point of order and recognize one of our own members who has received a very distinct acknowledgement from the wonderful nation of Jamaica. Our member Alvin Curling received the Order of Distinction with the rank of com-

mander. I think it is a wonderful honour that has been bestowed on our member here.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** That's not a point of order, but I'm sure all members join in wishing him well in his honour.

#### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** Pursuant to standing order 55, a statement of business of the House for next week:

On Monday afternoon we will begin second reading debate on Bill 111. On Monday evening we will continue third reading debate on Bill 56.

On Tuesday afternoon will be a Liberal opposition day. On Tuesday evening we will continue debate on Bill 111.

On Wednesday afternoon we'll continue debate on Bill 110. On Wednesday evening we will continue debate on Bill 111.

On Thursday morning, during private members' business, we will discuss ballot item number 29 standing in the name of Mr Murdoch and ballot item number 30 standing in the name of Ms Bountrogianni. On Thursday afternoon we will continue debate on Bill 30.

1450

#### PETITIONS

##### CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** This petition is addressed to the provincial Legislature of Ontario.

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

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

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

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

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

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

I affix my signature and am in full agreement.

##### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** I have a petition here with over 200 signatures on it out of 11,000 on this subject. It reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

I completely support this petition and will affix my signature.

#### HIGHWAY 407

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** Mr Speaker, you know I have presented this petition before on behalf of my constituents, and I will do so until changes are made.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the province of Ontario has proposed the extension of Highway 407 into Durham region and the proposed route, designated as the technically preferred route, will dissect the property of Kedron Dells Golf Course Ltd in Oshawa," which is in my riding;

"Whereas such routing will destroy completely five holes and severely impact two additional holes, effectively destroying the golf course as a viable and vibrant public golf course,

"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to change this routing to one of the other identified alternative routes, thus preserving this highly regarded public facility, patronized annually by thousands of"—not just my constituents, but—"residents"—not just of Durham, but all of the GTA.

I'm looking at this number of thousands of petitions here, and I'm presenting them directly to the Minister of Transportation. I'm pleased to endorse this petition as well.

#### LONDON HEALTH SCIENCES CENTRE

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In support of it, I put my signature.

**Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I affix my signature to this petition.

#### EDUCATION TAX CREDIT

**Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant):** I submit a petition entitled Support Choice in Education.

"Whereas wide parental and student choice are essential to the best possible education for all students; and

"Whereas many people believe that an education with a strong faith component, be it Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu or another religion, is best for their children; and

“Whereas over 100,000 students are currently enrolled in the independent schools of Ontario; and

“Whereas the parents of these students continue to support the public education system through their tax dollars; and

“Whereas an effective way to enhance the education of those students is to allow an education tax credit for a portion of the tuition fees paid for that education; and

“Whereas legislation has been passed to implement an equality in education tax credit;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to encourage the government to stay the course. Fairness in funding is long overdue. We ask the government to move as quickly as possible to phase in the equality in education tax credit.”

I support the signatures on that petition, and I add my own.

#### EMERY ADULT LEARNING CENTRE

**Mr Mario Sergio (York West):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas, due to the Harris government’s continued erosion of funding for education, the Toronto District School Board may be closing the Emery Adult Learning Centre in June of 2002; and

“Whereas many of the students at the Emery Adult Learning Centre are new Canadians who need to further their education if they are to become productive citizens of Ontario, and they do not want their school closed; and

“Whereas Mike Harris is cutting the heart out of the community by closing the Emery adult day school programs, whose students need this type of education to get off welfare, need better job prospects, and need to learn skills necessary to contribute to society;

“Now, therefore, we, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“We call upon the Minister of Education, who has the primary responsibility for providing quality education for each and every student in Ontario, including adults, to:

“(1) Listen to the views being expressed by the teachers and students of Emery Adult Learning Centre who are concerned on the implications and disruptive effects of the school closure;

“(2) Recognize the fundamental importance of adult education for new Canadians who need help settling in our neighbourhood communities;

“(3) Live up to the government’s commitment to provide adequate funding to meet the education needs of adult students across the province, and not allow the closing of Emery Adult Learning Centre.”

I concur in the content of the petition, and I will affix my signature to it.

#### LORD’S PRAYER

**Mr John O’Toole (Durham):** I present a petition on behalf of the Harmony Road United Church in my riding in Oshawa. Betty Greentree is the secretary.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

I’m pleased to support my constituents by adding my name.

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#### CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

**Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton):** This petition is to shut down puppy mills and to stop cruel animal breeding activities by passing MPP Mike Colle’s private member’s bill.

“To the provincial Legislature of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

I affix my signature to this petition.

#### OHIP SERVICES

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West):** I have further petitions from my riding of Hamilton West that read as follows:

“Whereas the provincial government’s decision to delist hearing aid evaluation and re-evaluation from OHIP coverage will lead to untreated hearing loss; and

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

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

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

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

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

“Whereas the government has already delisted \$100 million worth of OHIP services,

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately restore OHIP coverage for these delisted services.”

I add my name to this petition as I’m in support, and I’m very proud to hand off these to Emily Baker from my riding of Hamilton West, whose family and friends should know she is doing a fantastic job here on behalf of the people.

#### POVERTY

**Mr Mario Sergio (York West):** I have another petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas we are seniors and low-income people finding it very hard to live and pay all expenses every day; and

“Whereas with all the increases in our utilities in the last several months, we no longer can afford to have a warm house, or buy enough of a variety of foods, or buy some of the drugs that we desperately need; and

“Whereas we feel helpless, abandoned and totally neglected by our own government; and

“Whereas, without some sort of assistance from our government, either in terms of subsidy or lowering the cost of utilities, especially the gas for heating, we will have to seriously limit the quality and quantity of prescription drugs, or decide to buy food or pay the ever-increasing utility costs;

“We, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to help us live in dignity and with compassion and care.”

I concur, and I will affix my signature to it.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### QUALITY IN THE CLASSROOM ACT, 2001

##### LOI DE 2001 SUR LA QUALITÉ DANS LES SALLES DE CLASSE

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 22, 2001, on the motion for second reading of Bill 110, An Act to promote quality in the classroom / Projet de loi 110, Loi visant à promouvoir la qualité dans les salles de classe.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Further debate?

**Mr Mario Sergio (York West):** I believe there is unanimous consent—

**Interjection:** To allow you to pick up where Dave Levac left off?

**Mr Sergio:** Yes, to continue where we left off yesterday, I believe.

**The Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

**Mr Sergio:** The continuation of the debate is on Bill 110, or as we call it, the act to promote quality in education or, if you will, quality in the classroom. I don’t think anyone would disagree with that particular heading. When the government introduced the bill, that’s the way they chose to present it to the House and to the public: quality in education, quality in the classroom. Who can disagree with that?

I think all the members of this House agree that we are looking for quality in education, quality in the schools, quality in the system, quality in the classroom. I don’t think you would find anyone out of this chamber here who would disagree with that particular statement of creating quality education in the classroom. I don’t think you would find it among the students themselves. I don’t think you would find it among the parents, among the politicians, among the educators, teachers. I don’t think anyone would disagree that yes, indeed, we are looking for quality education in the classroom.

Why are we looking after six years of this government being in power? Why are we looking on this particular day for so-called quality education? What has happened in the last five or six years? Was something wrong before, or has something happened during the course of the last five or six years? I would say the latter prevails, because since this government came into power, perhaps deliberately—I’m not saying yes, it was; perhaps—they created a crisis. Of course, they came down with cuts, and they created a wonderful confrontation in all the various sectors. They created confrontation in the classrooms, with the educators, with the teachers, with the staff and with the parents, with the unions, with the students and everybody else connected with our so-called education system. We are dealing with this particular bill today to bring back some quality education, I hope, because of what happened in the past five or six years.

Has the government learned anything as to why we are here today, what they have done? I don’t think they have learned anything, because this bill, even the way it has

been presented, is not going to bring any peace to the situation or to the crisis they have created. It's not going to bring quality education when you are missing the most necessary ingredient: funding. They did it their way, as they did many other things. Funding. They changed the formula, let alone the cuts, which I hope to address in my few minutes, if I have time. They went ahead and they decided to change the funding formula. Did they advise anybody? Did they seek anybody's advice: the educators, student bodies, teachers, parents, even this House? We told them it was utterly wrong to change the funding system—not only to change it, but in the way they did it.

On top of that, of course, they have executed a tremendous number of cuts, which have decimated the funding for our education system. On top of that, we have seen most recently in this House, in the last budget, to the surprise of everybody, even most members of the government, on top of all the cuts and the crisis they had created in the education system, they went ahead and took away, I would say, at least another \$300 million from the heart of the public school system and said, "We're going to give it to the private sector," or religious schools or whatever they want to call it. It is money that is coming out of our public school system classrooms and given to others.

1510

This will not bring any betterment to the education system as we know it. It cannot. I believe that everything that is connected with the education system, not only what you see in the classroom, has to do with the education of our children. The cuts they have made and the way they have created the new funding are not only affecting the young ones from kindergarten age, elementary school, high school; they're affecting post-secondary education, colleges and university, and adult education as well. It is affecting every sector of our education, even closing schools in communities, and yes, it does affect parents, of course, and children as well.

Try to get a community centre, try to get the gym in the local school, in the local neighbourhoods, which used to be, and still should be—and in many areas still is—the cornerstone of those communities. Try to get the gym for community use. Forget it. It's gone. It's no longer there. Oh, yes, physically it's there, but if you want to use it for a community meeting or a parents' meeting, or whatever, you've got to shell out a lot of money, something like \$375 to \$450 for about two and a half hours. How many local groups can afford to lease or rent or get a permit for their local school gym, which has been paid for with their tax dollars? I don't think many groups can do that.

Yes, I think the government is recognizing today that we don't have the quality education that we used to have perhaps, or that we aspire to have. Are they changing things to make it better? I don't think so. They are going about it in the very wrong way.

In the past week alone, I think I have attended some four meetings. One was with respect to after-school programs: 48 kids are in and another 38 are waiting in line. What a beautiful program, to see those kids in a

healthy, clean, safe environment. Those kids were saying, "We like to be here after school because we don't have anybody at home. We have been told that it's not safe to be home by ourselves." These are young ones. "It is great that we are here. I can't be home because Mom has got to go to the second job," another problem created by the effects of the government. That's one area.

At another meeting I was at they are continuing to close down one of three major high schools, only because the capacity is not met by about 63 students. Can you imagine how the community must feel, that they may have to close that particular high school in that very large community because of 63 students? It's terrible.

I think it's terrible for the people that they have to make that decision as well, that they had to present it to the parents. It's got to be very difficult for the trustees who have to make a decision, for the staff they have to face, the parents and the community when they go to those meetings and they have to say, "Look, it's not us. We don't want to do it, but it's them, it's your government. It is the funding formula that is not allowing us to keep the school."

As you can see, the effect of the various cuts and the effect of the new funding formula has very severe and large ramifications. Is this the way to go with this bill? Will it solve all the problems? Absolutely not. It will not solve the problems. It will not do justice to correct what the government has done in the last five or six years.

I would remind the government that as we continue and move toward ending the debate—I'm sure that with the majority the government has, if they want to ram this bill through, they will. They will pass it. They continue to do the same thing they did with past bills—in their own way. Regardless of what people outside say—the students and the parents—regardless of what we say on this side, they will go ahead and approve it.

But let me remind the government that for the past six years they have done exactly the contrary of what the unions, staff, teachers, parents and the opposition in this House have been saying. What you're doing is wrong. The way you're going about it is wrong. I hope they will get it.

**The Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale):** I'm very pleased to offer some comment on the excellent presentation by the member from York West, which I believe follows on yesterday's equally impressive speech by my colleague the member from Brant.

The member from Brant, as many members will know, is an educator and former principal. I think he offered the kind of comment that gets right at the heart of this government's measures, which strikes at the distinction that is so often the case with this government between the quality of their rhetoric and the quality of their actions.

I'm a Toronto member. I represent the diverse downtown riding of Toronto Centre-Rosedale, which is home to an incredibly challenging population—challenging in the sense that many of the kids who go to school in my riding don't necessarily have English as a first language.

There are also many kids who are poor. One of the factors that I think it's very important for me as a representative of that riding to continue to impress upon members of the government and the public is the extent to which the quality inner-city programming of the Toronto District School Board has deteriorated dramatically under this government.

I have the honour of moving into Cabbagetown on January 29, and I'll be living across from Winchester school, which is a great example. It celebrated its 125th anniversary a couple of years ago. It used to have a gifted program, but as a result of the funding challenges of the Toronto District School Board brought about by this government, that school's advanced classes have been taken from them.

I want to remind members that the Minister of Education in an answer earlier today said that quality education is not necessarily reflective of how much you spend. But the fact of the matter is that the rhetoric of just doing more with less falls awfully short for many of my constituents.

**Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York):** I listened with some interest here today about school facilities. I had not heard the argument that was made by the member, and it's absolutely true. The schools, which were once the centre of all things neighbourhood in our communities, are really not that way any more. Where there used to be dances in the evenings from the parents' associations, they can't go there any more, and the dances are now held in churches or not at all. Where there used to be events in the evening like Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, they're not there because they can't afford to be there any more. Where there used to be children playing and basketball games and pickup games, they're not there any more. The schools are lying barren and vacant, and what used to be the heart and soul of communities and neighbourhoods is simply not the same.

Now, it's all well and good—and I take the government at its word that they are looking at education, and only teacher education and nothing else. But what has been lost in that whole formula, is exactly what the member talked about. I hope the government members listened to him, because he hit a kernel and a very strong element of truth, that schools and education have to be more than just teachers, more than just students, more than just testing. They have to be the heart and soul of the community, because it is around those schools—and around the churches that predated them, I guess—that the neighbourhoods were built. Without that link, that very real link—I guess there's no other word—to the community, a great deal will be lost. I commend him for drawing that to our attention and hope the government, when they're doing future funding formulas in other bills, will start to look at our schools as resources rather than places where they simply try to move these kinds of motions to further test teachers.

1520

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre):** It's really interesting, listening to the comments across the way.

I'd like to give you a little history. About 40 years ago, Ontario was recognized as having the best education system in the world, and that has gradually deteriorated. What our government has tried to do is not to address just the teacher area—although that's where most of the objections for the changes have come from, the teacher unions—but we've tried to address it in a number of areas, whether it be curriculum, guaranteed funding in the classrooms, guaranteed funding for textbooks, which wasn't there before. We heard that when we went around the province on the public hearings into Bill 160. We heard the number of schools that were making do with elastics and tape on books that were 30 and 40 years old.

We've made a lot of changes and we know there have been some objections and some concerns, but there is no doubt about the emphasis that this government is placing on improving quality in the classroom. In the early 1980s we were becoming aware as a populace, as a result of comments being made by the world of academia, that the graduates from high school were not properly prepared for university. This deteriorated even further.

I can remember when we got elected in 1995, I was speaking with David Cooke—not David Cooke of the NDP but the former Liberal member from Kitchener—and he said, “Wayne, make sure that with your education reforms, you carry them out. Don't wimp out like we did. We didn't have the guts to carry it out.” The NDP government, as you're quite aware, initiated the Royal Commission on Learning, and our government is trying to carry out the reforms that commission recommended.

**Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale):** It is a pleasure to join in the debate this afternoon on Bill 110, Quality in the Classroom Act, 2001.

Different speakers have talked about various issues. One of the things that keeps coming back, especially from the member of Toronto Centre-Rosedale—as if to fix everything, you just keep throwing the money. I think it's very important to bring accountability back. You just can't solve everything by throwing the money.

I do understand that with a lot of kids and immigrant kids—and I've gone through that in terms of somebody coming in, and they don't know English. I think we have a great system where kids are very quickly integrated into the system.

One of the members mentioned, I believe it was the member from York West, the closing of some schools. I come from a riding, Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale, as you know, where we have a lot of new schools opening up. I think what is happening is that it's a tough choice, and somebody has to make that choice.

The fact of the matter is that people do move. We forget that. In fact, in my own neighbourhood there was some land left to make a new junior school, but it was not used. They found out that the people moving into that area had families that were grown up already, so they did not need that junior school.

You have to make sure the schools are there for the people if they need them. At the same time, if people have moved away, it's very simple: the schools are not

needed. You have to make the tough decision that if the critical mass is not there, then you have to make a choice. I want to make sure that people understand that.

Portables have been my concern for the last 30, 35 years that I've been involved in the system. I think my time is running out. We will try to address the portables.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for York West now has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr Sergio:** My thanks to the members for Toronto Centre-Rosedale, Beaches-East York, Kitchener Centre and Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale.

If there is more evidence needed for the members of the government, I think they should be looking at the poll conducted just a few days ago which confirms that we have a massive crisis in our education system, and they are not moving to solve it. What did the poll say? Of the parents not supporting the public school system, 63% said the government is spending too little on the public education system. Of those supporting the public school system, 71% said—this is six years later, after we have seen the crisis—the government is spending too little on our education system. If this is not enough, 43% of the general public is saying to the government that your funding formula is one of the major reasons why we are having such a problem today in the education system.

Evidently they may not be bothered, Mr Speaker, because just very recently they went ahead and removed \$300 million from the education system and gave it to other boards. That must have had a very devastating effect, and this must be a tremendous weight on the educators, on the trustees, on the students, on the parents and everybody else who has to do with giving that quality education to the classroom students.

I hope the government is listening, I hope they will understand, and I hope they will abide by the feeling of the people.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr David Christopherson):** The floor is now open for further debate.

**Mr Prue:** Teachers in this province have always been tested. I challenge anyone to tell me a time when they were not. Going right back to the turn of the century, teachers were tested by their principals, teachers were tested by their superintendents, teachers were tested sometimes by their peers. But they have always been tested.

When I was a boy in Toronto Centre-Rosedale, at Lord Dufferin school in Regent Park, I used to watch every few months when whoever was my teacher at the time would be tested. Someone would come in from the school board downtown; the principal would come in. They would sit at the back of the room, and you could tell on those days that the teacher tended to be a little more nervous and a little bit more careful when he or she was teaching. But the teacher was always tested, the teacher was always watched, and people generally knew whether the teacher was doing a good job within the confines of the system, be it the Toronto board or be it Lord Dufferin school.

Later, as a young man, I was a supply teacher for a while with the Toronto board, and I want to tell you that I

was tested. Somebody would come and watch the supply teacher as he taught and would watch his interaction with the students. Someone would sit at the back, whether that was the department head or the principal at the schools in which I was a supply teacher. The teachers were tested.

What is happening now, with the greatest of respect, is not that the teachers are tested; they have always been tested. What it is now is that there will be a qualifying test, not by the superintendent, not by the persons trained to work with them or even their own peers; the test will be imposed by the minister. That is the difficulty here—not that the minister isn't a good minister, of course. I'm sure that at least 50% of the members of this House would think she was a wonderful minister. But the problem is that the professional teachers, because of what has happened over the last number of years, will wonder whether this is a system which is fair to them. They will wonder whether this is a system that is any better, or potentially much worse, than the system they had been used to for all of the last century.

I ask the members opposite, what other profession can you name that has the Minister of Education or a minister of this House impose tests upon them? Other professions have tests. If you're a doctor, you are tested by your own College of Physicians and Surgeons. If you are found wanting or your credentials need to be updated, they will be the group that looks at you and sees whether you've done a good job. If you are a lawyer, it is the same thing. You will go before the Law Society of Upper Canada, and the Law Society of Upper Canada, your own peers and professionals, will determine whether or not you still meet the qualifications or if you have somehow abrogated them. If you are an engineer, there's the society of engineers of Ontario that will make that decision.

**1530**

But if you are a teacher, it will be the Minister of Education. It will be a government bureaucrat; it will be the minister. It will be a political decision whether you're qualified to do what you are doing. I do not blame some of the teachers for being just a little wary. I do not blame them at all for thinking that this is an incursion upon their profession, an incursion upon what they do, and do so well.

Why is there now a need to change the system? After all these years, why is there a need to change this system? I've asked myself over and over again on this bill, "Why today?" Is it because the teachers are demoralized? Of course they're demoralized. Is it because the system is in some kind of chaos after the last five years? Of course the system is in chaos after the last five years. Is it because there's no more money in the system and this is some way of sidetracking you? Of course that's true too. But why today? Is it because of the underfunding?

Maybe I have a different perspective from some of the members here in the House. It's a different perspective because of where I grew up, and that was in downtown Toronto, not too far from here. You could actually walk from where I grew up to here in about half an hour. It was in Regent Park.

The people who lived there were very poor. The people who lived there, most of them, by and large were uneducated. The people who lived there during the later part I lived there were increasingly more immigrant-based families. They understood, though, one thing, all of them: they understood the value of a good education. They understood the value of teachers who cared. They understood the value of people who would fight for them, who would give a poor kid a chance, who would share the book or stay after school. They understood the difference between someone who wanted to learn and someone who didn't. They stretched that limit. They did everything. I have only the fondest memories of the teachers in Regent Park. I have only the fondest memories of Lord Dufferin school.

Some people might find that rather strange, to have fond memories of such a place, but I have those fond memories because those people always went the extra mile for the kids. There were always classes after school for those who needed them. There were classes for us to learn about science. There was a science club, a drama club, a French club. All of those things existed, and the teachers did it because they loved to teach, because they were professionals and because they were community people.

I don't know whether they have that same feeling today, because they've been beaten so often and beaten so badly. I don't know whether they have that, and I can only blame a system that has changed them from some of the most profoundly wonderful people in our society to those you now feel need to be regulated, watched and carefully monitored in everything they do, and you set up bureaucracies to do it. It is a sad day.

Let me go now to what is really happening in our schools while we talk about the need to test teachers, this overwhelming need to test teachers, who have always been tested. Look at what is happening in our schools. Last night I had the honour of attending with a group of people in the Crescent Town area near Victoria Park and Danforth, for those who know Toronto well. It is a home of high-rises to, I guess, 8,000 or 9,000 people who live in eight or 10 high-rise buildings. It's very dense, and in the centre of that community is a wonderful little school, which unsurprisingly is called Crescent Town school.

We went there last night on a safety audit, to walk around after dark in the schoolyard and in the walkways leading up to the school, and in the bushes and trees and things that are still in that urban environment. I want to tell you of the disappointment those of us who walked around had. We were disappointed because of the safety factors that used to be at that school that are no longer there. We were disappointed to see that lights that had been put up at great expense over the years now no longer had bulbs in them. We were disappointed to see that lights that were supposed to turn on when intruders came close to the schools no longer functioned. We were disappointed to see sidewalks full of cracks and holes, which obviously, when the winter comes and the snow and ice and the freezing, are going to be icy and slippery

spots where children will be hurt. We were disappointed to see the state of the outer building, which is now starting to go into decay, although it is not particularly all that old.

A few weeks ago I had an opportunity to talk to some teachers and principals of other schools in the neighbourhood, in that wonderful place that was once called East York, and I guess still is called East York for those who live there. A principal in Toronto-Danforth talked about the lack of money for caretakers, that there are no caretakers there any more. One of his duties every day is to go around to the washrooms and to actually clean the toilets. So instead of working with the teachers who are now going to be tested, instead of providing them advice and his experience on how they can better manage their classes and work with the kids and teach the curriculum, he takes an hour or so every day to do janitorial work because there's nobody else to do it, because the funding formula will not allow the schools to be cleaned.

We look too at what other things are happening. In Hamilton they've asked the people who live there what they think of the conditions of their schools, and the number one response was that the people there find their schools to be dirty, and they are dirty. There are not enough janitors, there are not enough caretakers, there are not enough groundskeepers.

I challenge any of the government members to walk around the schools in your neighbourhood at night, after everyone has gone, and tell me if there's garbage on the lawns. I want to ask you whether somebody has picked it up; or when it snows, whether it's adequately cleaned up right away. I want you all to ask yourself if the physical school grounds are in better or worse condition than they were five years ago. If you can't say they're better, then that means something is wrong with the funding formula you have announced, something is wrong with the capital projects you have supported.

I'd like to talk a bit about the swimming pools in Toronto. It's quite an issue in Toronto. It may not be in other places where the school boards did not have pools, but because the Toronto board as it existed prior to amalgamation had its own taxing power, it had a fairly rich base. It had the wherewithal to do things that other communities maybe could only dream of. Because it had that in existence side by side with the Toronto city hall, and I guess the city halls of the other five municipalities, it had money and it went into joint ownership with the city to put in a number of pools. In total, they put in 84 swimming pools. Those pools are not just for school use. They were for community use in the evenings. But what happened was that over time many of those, because there were other available community pools or because maybe in some of the places there wasn't the demand, became pools primarily for the use of students. Today there are 84 pools in Toronto that are in danger of being closed down because there is no funding formula that allows for them to remain in place.

When I asked Mrs Ecker a couple of days ago during question period, her statement was quite blunt, and I

thank her for being blunt. She has no intention whatsoever of helping to keep those pools open. I don't know what the government intends to happen—fill them with sand—because I guess you can't leave them empty, you can't leave them full of stagnant water. You can't do anything, I guess, except fill them full of sand so that no one is hurt who might happen by and fall down an eight- or nine-foot embankment of a concrete pool. I guess that's the fate of our schools in Toronto as far as it goes for the swimming pools. The children in this city who used to know and learn how to swim will no longer be able to do so. Their pool, which was once a place of excitement, will no longer be that way. In the summertime, when it's very hot, they're going to have to find alternate places to go. Hopefully, all of their parents have a cottage in Muskoka.

**1540**

We then turn to textbooks in the schools. When I was a boy, and I'm sure when all the members were boys or girls, there were always adequate textbooks to be had. Certainly I don't ever remember sharing one. But today in Toronto schools 66% of the textbooks are shared by the students. In Toronto schools today, 63% of the students who do have a textbook, even when they share it, have one which is worn out, the cover is off or has pages missing. It's just worn and it's outdated.

The Toronto Star reported that the school board did a poll trying to figure out what people thought. The previous member spoke about that, so I don't want to spend a long time on that, but I will tell you that the consumer and the citizen patience with what is happening in our schools is starting to take a completely new turn. Whereas before it may have been fashionable to attack a teacher, whereas before it may have been fashionable to say we're going to cut the fat out of the schools, I want to tell you that is no longer the case today.

That poll came as absolutely no surprise to me. Knocking on the doors, as I did just a couple of months ago, education was probably the big issue. It certainly was the big issue for people who had children in the system. Almost to a person, they recounted the stories of the decline in their schools, the decline in their neighbourhoods because of the schools, the decline in their children's education and the despair many of them had for hoping that their children would have a good education. I did talk to a few who were seriously considering sending their children to private schools, and that has to be a very sad thing for a province which once had the finest education system, I am convinced, in the entire world. I wish we could say that today. Ontario has gone from having one of the best systems in North America to having the worst system of every single state, except Mississippi—I think there's one that's actually worse—and worse than any of the provinces in terms of how much money we spend, the curriculum we have and the ability of our teachers to teach it.

We also have to think a little bit about all of those poor kids who have special needs. There are 37,000 kids on the waiting list for special education, and last year the

number grew by another 2,000. Their needs are not being met. Whether they need psychiatrists or psychologists, whether they have learning disabilities, whether they have dyslexia, they are not having their needs met. Those children will grow up and, unfortunately, if something is not done, will have a lifetime of disability. We need to start looking at that and spending the money.

I personally have no children, but I will tell you, I believe with all my heart that the people in this province would be willing to pay if they knew that the children who are there would receive an education equivalent or better to the one which they themselves received. They would not begrudge that money. As a matter of fact, I don't know of anyone who would begrudge it. If the government were to announce that they were going to increase taxes—something I think they could never do—and that money would be spent on the children and the education system in this province to bring it back up, I'm telling you, I think you would be surprised that a majority of people would agree to that.

It is a myth to say you are spending more on schools, as you say. It is an absolute myth. Enrolment has grown. You do not factor that in. There are 4% more children in the schools today than there were in 1995. The children who are coming here are not necessarily children who understand our whole society. Many of them are immigrant children, particularly in Toronto, Hamilton and Ottawa, who need ESL.

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour):** Spending is up more than 4%.

**Mr Prue:** Spending is up. That's my next point; thank you for bringing it to me. Spending is up, but so is inflation. Inflation since 1995 has increased by nearly 15%. The spending has not kept up with the inflation.

**Hon Brenda Elliott (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** Stand closer to the microphone. We can't hear you.

**Mr Prue:** You heard me.

The reality is that there has been about a \$2-billion reduction in education in the last six years in this province. What needs to be done is to bring that money back, to put back some real force into the education system, to make it a truly great education system. It is not enough to simply say we are going to test teachers. It is not enough to say that those teachers are the problem, or even that there's anything that's going to be gained. I have yet to hear the benefits of testing those teachers. I have yet to hear that centralized ministerial testing has any benefit over the peer testing, the principal testing or the testing of the teachers' own boards.

The reality is that the whole system is starting to implode, and we need to do something far stronger than simply test the teachers. You have to go back to a system to give them confidence, to give the principals authority to make the decisions rather than to clean the toilets. You have to go back to a system where the schools are safe, where there are lights on the outside at night so that no one is hurt, where the infrastructure is allowed to be repaired. We need to go back to a system where the

schools are open to everyone, where the community is involved and comes in at night. We need a system where there are adequate textbooks. We need a system where there is some money.

I think I'm going to have a hard time voting for this bill, but I could even vote for it if I saw some hope on the other side of the equation, the hope that you're going to do something where it really counts and not just attack the profession, who have spent their whole lives, all of them, every teacher, committed to making this a better province.

**The Acting Speaker:** Members now have up to two minutes for questions and comments.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** A couple of points that you made are just complete, absolute myths, to use your words. To pick up on the last point, enrolment is up 4% this year? It's 0.9. As far as the inflation rate at 15%, I don't know where you got that number, but obviously there's no way it's been 15% since 1995; not even close to 2.6% per year.

Talk about the teachers, yes. Do you know something? I would like to have the teachers committed, involved. We all want that approach; we all need that approach. We want good teachers, and we have good teachers. We have good teachers to teach our children, and I'm not opposed to that. But you've got to understand that sometimes teachers' initiatives are different from the government's initiatives. The teachers didn't like the formalized report card. They didn't like the standard curriculum.

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair):** They didn't like the social contract.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** They didn't like the social contract, and they didn't like some other issues that we brought forward. But my constituents I talk to tell me that they like the formalized report card, they like the standard curriculum, they like these things that we brought in that made for a better school system.

Did that upset some teachers? Yes, that upset some teachers. I understand it upset some teachers. But the opposition is making the argument that you shouldn't bring in legislation that offends some teachers. If that's your approach to education, why don't you just let the teachers run the education system? That's how it used to be, because every government was frightened to take the teachers on. What you ended up with was a system that teachers liked but the parents didn't. So we came to office and said that we have to change some things. They weren't that dramatic, they weren't that draconian as far as education was concerned: report cards, curriculum, standard testing and so on. But you're telling me that we've done this and the teachers aren't happy about it, so we should placate the teachers at the expense of the parents. I don't get that.

**Mr Duncan:** I'm pleased to have the opportunity to respond to the member for Beaches-East York and to have the opportunity to welcome him to this House and to congratulate him on his victory in the by-election.

First of all, the teachers didn't used to run the system. That's just Tory mythology. You're just spouting off

without any factual basis at all. Our teachers are among the best trained, have been among the best trained and most successful and competent not only in this province but throughout North America. I can say that unequivocally.

**1550**

The problem is that to make the education system work, you have to have buy-in from all of the participants: from parents, from teachers, from school boards, from the provincial government. The kind of conflict that the Minister of Labour and the Minister of Education have foisted on the system has resulted, and I say this with due respect to my colleagues, in an unprecedented loss of classroom time, an unprecedented deterioration in the quality of education, and an unprecedented decline in the quality of the physical assets: textbooks, heating, everything. The whole funding formula is out of whack.

This bill sets up another false war against teachers, and it's unfortunate that the government chooses to do that. But the people I talk to in my riding and around the province have seen through this thin veneer. They know what this is all about. They've got the argument. The mythology that the Minister of Labour and others have tried to create around the teaching profession and the way they've bashed a lot of very good people—and I'm sure, Mr Speaker, you remember that the teachers, as expressed through their federations, weren't particularly friendly to your government and they weren't particularly friendly to our government. There were always difficult relations. Neither one of those governments simply caved in. The difference here is, this government doesn't want to listen to anybody except itself, and you're messing up. Our test scores are down. You've been on the job six years and you've dropped the ball.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** To the member for Beaches-East York, I want to say I enjoyed his comments, but I thought the most telling thing I've heard here this afternoon has been the comments by the current Minister of Labour, who says the problem has been that, up to now, no government has had the courage to take the teachers on. I think that speaks volumes. I think that says what this is all about.

The government, at every opportunity it's had since being elected in 1995, has worn as a badge of honour their supposed courage to take teachers on. I have to ask myself, why is it that they want to take teachers on? Why is it that it seems to be the only profession they want to take on and make accountable? I say it's pure politics. They're trying to get into the politics that somehow teachers are seen as a privileged group of people in our society and that somehow or other—and it would be nice if somebody would turn off that cellphone. There we go. We're not going to say which minister of the crown that was. If the phone was ringing, it's not for me, let me tell you.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Bisson:** Sometimes you can banter and have fun here. But the point is that I think the comments that the Minister of Labour has made are really telling. He's try-

ing to say that his government is the only one that has had the courage to take things on, and that's what this is all about. The government has wanted to pick a fight. I say on the issue of recertification, why is it, and I ask this as a simple question, that the only profession we're talking about recertification for is teachers? If we as a Legislature think recertification is a good idea, and that's open for debate, then we should look at other trades, such as electricians, such as plumbers, such as lawyers.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** They are.

**Mr Bisson:** No, they're not recertified. No, they're not. To say otherwise, I think, is a disservice to the teachers. So I say this is strictly about picking on teachers and getting into the politics of the issue.

**Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls):** One of the members opposite, in his rebuttal, said that this government doesn't listen to anybody. We do listen to somebody, and that is the electorate. This bill is all about enacting a campaign commitment.

I know that for the NDP and the Liberals, keeping your campaign commitments is a foreign concept. But for us on this side of the aisle, between 1995 and 1999 you could pick up our campaign document, the Common Sense Revolution, and page for page check off every campaign commitment that was kept in there. We're doing the same thing now from our Blueprint and our campaign commitments in 1999. In fact, when the Premier the other day announced that he was going to step down in a few months from being the Premier of this province and you listened to all the radio call-in shows about people's opinions about him, everyone said, "Love him or not, the one thing you have to say about the guy is that he kept his word; he did what he said he was going to do." This is yet again this government keeping a campaign commitment.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. I'm sorry to interrupt. It's your own minister who is out of order here, and the member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale. Both of you, please.

**Mr Maves:** The member opposite wasn't here and may not know the history. There have been 24 studies since the Second World War that all said, "You've got to get education off the property tax." Do you know why? Because it makes for totally imbalanced funding across the province of Ontario, a total imbalance between separate and public schools, a total imbalance between rural and urban schools.

The member opposite laments losing pools. How many boards in Ontario can afford to build 87 pools? If you're short on textbooks, maybe it's because you've built pools. The rest of the people around the province wouldn't even dream about that. We know that prior to 1995, there were all kinds of board buildings being built. Those monies should have been spent on textbooks.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Beaches-East York has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr Prue:** I'm going to stay a little closer to the microphone for Mrs Elliott. I hope you can hear me better.

I heard some of the comments—"If the teachers ran the system." With the greatest respect, the school boards ran the system. The school boards, which were democratically elected, ran the system. The school boards, which had the power to tax, ran the system. The school board members, who went from door to door at election time asking the community what they wanted, ran the system. Those poor people, and we have one here in the audience with us today, earn a pittance and are still trying to run a system that is badly in need of overhaul—overhaul from what you have done, not from what they did before, with the greatest respect.

The member heckled me a little about the inflation rates, but I invite him to go back and look at what happened in 1995, 1996, 1997 and 1998, the seven years up to today. Add those numbers up and you will see that it approximates 15%, not the 2% or 3% you're talking about.

The other heckle that I thought was kind of fun was about the number of new students in the schools being 0.4% this year. That's true. That's this year. But if you had listened carefully to my comments, I was talking about everything that has happened since 1995, and it's not a 0.4% increase of students in the schools, with the greatest respect.

The member opposite talked about—I still have 18 seconds—the foreign concept of looking after your campaign commitments. I want to tell you that that has always been my priority, and it has always been my policy. Watch: whatever I say I'm going to do, I will do it or have a damn good explanation why I didn't.

**Mr Bisson:** And Mike Harris resigned, just as you said he would.

**Mr Prue:** Exactly.

**The Acting Speaker:** The floor is now open for further debate.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order.

**Hon R. Gary Stewart (Minister without Portfolio):** It's my pleasure to be able to speak to Bill 110, the Quality in the Classroom Act. Before I start the more formal part of my speech, I have to make a couple of comments in rebuttal, for lack of a better word, to what I've heard over the last few minutes.

I can't understand how the member from Timmins-James Bay would suggest we're out to pick a fight. I do not understand how you can pick a fight on something you want to make sure is top-quality. I can't understand that.

I also can't understand—well, I can understand it. The Liberal policy has always been to throw money at something without any possibility of, or indeed little thought about, results. This is not the philosophy of our government, nor will it be. We want good-quality policies, we want to make sure that quality is in the schools, and it will be. We want to make sure it is there.

I'm very pleased to debate this bill. I can't, for the life of me, understand how the opposition parties can make comments against this bill, against quality in our class-

rooms. Is it that they don't want these students to graduate, to be able to compete in the global marketplace? Is it their idea that there should be no quality in the schools, or additional ones, that tests shouldn't be there?

**1600**

It was interesting this morning. I had a meeting with some of the OPSBA members, and they said to me, "If you could develop some policies that are consistent across the province, it would be great." I said, "Do you think they would support it?" "Oh, yes, they probably would." I said, "I thought we did. I thought the curriculum was one." Did they support that? No, everybody has been fighting that. I thought the report card was another one. Did they support that? No. They have fought against every policy to make some type of consistency across the education system in this province. So I have a little difficulty when I hear some of the comments.

I personally have been in business something like 40 years, and I can tell you this: I wanted to make sure that the services we provided, the product we produced, was of the best quality possible. My staff, many of whom were there 25 or 30 years, also wanted to make sure that they had the best qualifications possible to make sure they could deal with the public in the particular business we were in.

The purpose of our education reform, I believe and our government believes, is to set higher standards for student achievement in Ontario and to provide the tools and resources for student success. Isn't that what it's all about, student success? We want to make sure those students, when they graduate, will be able to compete with all other students from around the world for those jobs, the jobs we certainly have had the opportunity of creating, some 800,000 of them over the last six years.

Excellence in education starts in the classroom, with the best possible teachers. It is essential that they instill a love of lifelong learning in our students, as well as providing them with the tools to meet the challenges of changing jobs and new careers. It is said that many of the students who graduate in the future will have five or six careers. Should they not be fully qualified to make some of the changes they may have to in the future over a different career?

Ontario has many excellent teachers, and many of them recognize the need to keep their knowledge and skills current. I know the opposition doesn't realize that change is necessary, and I guess to a degree they don't believe that the future is changing; it is, and we've got to be prepared to change with it and make sure that we are all equipped to meet the challenges and have the necessary information required to make sure that we can all be part of making sure this great province continues on the right track.

They are actively involved in professional development activities to build their qualifications and develop new knowledge and skills. That really is why our government has introduced our comprehensive teacher testing program, to ensure that all teachers, both new and

experienced, have the capabilities to help our students succeed and achieve higher standards.

You can be the greatest academic in the world, but some do not necessarily have the ability to effectively pass on that knowledge to others. We have to make sure that all of our teachers have that ability to pass on information to the students.

We continue to build on this commitment with Bill 110. It has two purposes. First, subject to the approval of Bill 110, is that all new graduates of Ontario faculties of education and all teachers new to Ontario would be required to take an Ontario teacher qualifying test. I want to emphasize the word "qualifying." Passage of the test would be a requirement for becoming a member of the Ontario College of Teachers and receiving a certificate of qualification from the college.

I can't for the life of me understand why anybody would be against that. There have to be standards, there have to be set qualifications, and that's why this type of test is necessary.

The qualifying test would assess the readiness of teachers to start their professional life and would ensure they have the minimum level of knowledge and skills to begin teaching in our schools. That minimum, in my mind, has to be certainly in the upper portion of minimum.

Its purpose and form would be similar to exams administered by other professional regulatory bodies, such as the National Dental Hygiene Certification Board and such other groups as nurses and occupational therapists.

I carry an Ontario funeral director's licence, and have since 1960, when I graduated. I have to renew it every year. If I want to practise, I have to go and do a refresher course and pass necessary tests every five years. It's interesting, because what I've said is that times are changing. We've got to make sure we have the up-to-date knowledge necessary.

The ministry is taking a number of steps to ensure that the Ontario teacher qualification test will be unique to Ontario, as well as being fair, valid and reliable. Development of the test is being supported by consultations with a broad range of education stakeholders. We consulted with parents. We consulted with students. We consulted with principals and vice-principals, with teachers, trustees, deans of faculties of education and the Ontario College of Teachers.

Is the opposition, which is totally against this, suggesting that these people do not have the ability to set the standards and qualifications for the teachers in this province to teach our students? Who else do you consult with except the people who are involved in the business of teaching? I can't quite understand. If you want a plumber, do you go and speak to an electrician? I would think you go to a plumber.

The ministry has established the Ontario Teacher Qualifying Test Advisory Committee to advise on test program issues. It will provide the ministry with advice on test development and validation, as well as on the written materials to assess those teachers taking the test.

For example, there would be a brochure describing the test program that would also include an application package with registration information, sample test questions and preparation test items.

It is important to note that Ontario is not the only jurisdiction to be moving in the direction of spelling out entrance-to-the-profession tests. In fact, the ministry is drawing from the best experience of what other professions and jurisdictions are doing in this area.

For example, the United Kingdom recently introduced a test for new applicants to the teaching profession. In addition, France, Belgium and Switzerland use civil service exams to evaluate those who wish to teach. Most American states require their teacher candidates to pass one or more certification exams to become licensed to teach.

Are they all wrong? I don't think so.

The proposed qualifying test in Bill 110 would have questions based on areas of knowledge and skills derived from the standards of practice for the teaching profession established by the Ontario College of Teachers. The college is mandated by statute to establish standards of practice for all teachers in Ontario.

Once aspiring teachers have completed the qualifying test, the results would be available in four to six weeks. All test-takers would be advised of their personal scores.

It's interesting, when you think about it. Many of the teachers want to make sure that the students pass tests, and yet some of them are very hesitant to do tests themselves.

#### 1610

The test provider would advise the Ontario College of Teachers of pass or fail results for all participants. Candidate teachers who meet all the requirements for certification, including passing the qualifying test, would be placed on the college register, which lists its members, their qualifications and their status with the college.

Finally, for 2002 and 2003, the ministry will cover all costs associated with taking the test. In addition, an appeal process would be available to all teachers who take the qualifying test. The qualifying test proposed by Bill 110 is an additional step being taken by this government to improve the quality of education in Ontario. In a rapidly changing and increasingly competitive world, quality assurance among all professionals, and especially teachers, is imperative.

The second purpose of Bill 110 is to create a comprehensive performance appraisal system to evaluate teachers on their performance in the classroom. The new provincial standards outlined in the legislation would ensure that principals and school boards regularly and consistently evaluate teachers' knowledge and skills.

Bill 80, which the Legislature passed last June, established a comprehensive framework for professional learning by Ontario teachers. Bill 80 requires all teachers to participate in a series of professional development activities and courses in five-year cycles throughout their careers.

Bill 110 would now establish the regulatory authority necessary for the establishment of teachers' learning

plans. These plans would be developed by teachers in consultation with their principals and would map out a course of action for professional growth. Mandatory professional learning ensures that teachers' knowledge and skills are up to date. We've talked about the changing world that we live in. We must make sure, whether it be in the teaching profession or whatever, that the knowledge and skills are indeed up to date.

Performance appraisal provides the necessary quality assurance, that professional learning has been effective, that the teachers in our classrooms are the best they can possibly be. For that, I don't know why anybody would say no.

Equally important is the way that Bill 110 would bring consistency to teacher appraisals in reference to their frequency, timing, standards and methods. While many boards have been developing excellent performance review practices, few school boards have policies and programs in place to help weak teachers meet the standards that they need to achieve. If they have a problem, if there is a weakness in some part of their performance, why then would they not want to make sure that they are qualified and to do the necessary things that will make sure that their qualifications are upgraded so that they do have the ability to pass on their tremendous knowledge to the student?

In addition, few boards currently have evaluation policies that recognize teacher excellence for identifying possible mentors or exemplary teachers.

These findings reconfirm the value of Bill 110 and the need to provide consistent province-wide standards for teacher evaluation. The creation of such standards would clearly be a major factor in ensuring that our teacher appraisal system is fair to all members of the profession no matter where they teach in Ontario.

These are the reasons that the bill would provide for every experienced teacher to have an evaluation year every three years, with at least two evaluations of their classroom performance during that year.

Our government strongly believes in the involvement of all parents in their children's education. That's why we created the parent councils, and indeed they should have input into their children's education.

Another important milestone in Bill 110 is that parent and student input will be an integral part of a teacher's performance appraisal. Who would know better than the student? Bill 110 would also provide the regulatory authority for parent and pupil input. However, parent and pupil comments would not be the sole factor in any unsatisfactory rating of a teacher.

The important aspect of the teacher appraisal system is to provide support and facilitate teacher improvement—bottom line. The point of Bill 110 is not to dismiss teachers but to ensure teacher excellence. Bill 110 provides a very detailed and fair approach to teachers receiving a less than satisfactory rating, with a real emphasis on opportunities to help strengthen a teacher's classroom skills. I believe the performance appraisal system in Bill 110 is consistent and fair to teachers.

I would like to summarize the key features of the performance appraisal system that would be established by this legislation: regular evaluation of all teachers; consistent standards for teacher appraisals, including an objective rating system that will be used throughout the province; parent and student input into the appraisal process; support for teachers who need to improve their performance; and removal of low-performing teachers from the classroom. Certainly some may have to change their vocation because maybe they did not find the right vocation in the first place.

Bill 110 is win-win legislation. With the passage of the Quality in the Classroom Act, 2001, parents will know their children are being taught by teachers who can call upon the best classroom skills and knowledge. Taxpayers will know they are receiving value for their education dollars. All Ontarians will know we're moving closer to an education system that is firmly focused on quality, accountability and improved student achievement.

**The Acting Speaker:** Members now have up to two minutes for responses.

**Mr Duncan:** I'm pleased to have the opportunity to respond to my colleague from Peterborough.

First of all, the way the member would characterize the positions of the opposition parties with respect to issues like standardized testing, curriculum enhancements, teacher testing, teacher evaluation, he would say, "They're opposed to it; we're in favour of it." Well, he's wrong. The previous government brought forward the Royal Commission on Learning, which dealt with every one of those issues, and every party in this Legislature endorsed them. Where we differ is on how you do it. We think there are better ways of doing it.

The member didn't reference the fact that in six years of Tory government in this province, standardized test scores have not improved. If you want to talk about effective policy, you haven't done it, and you haven't done it—

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** You were opposed.

**Mr Duncan:** We were opposed to yours, and we put forward a very different plan that was better than yours. If we had had a chance to put our plan in, those test scores would be better today. You have failed miserably.

The other thing you forget to talk about is how you always put hostages in these bills, like the funding formula, where you fund schools based on the amount of square footage in a school, the same way they fund federal penitentiaries.

Your government's policy on education has failed miserably, and the best indicator, I say to the Minister of Labour, who laughs, is that students' test scores have not improved. They've gone down in six years of your government. In Great Britain over the same period of time, they've gone up. They've gone down on your watch, just as your funding per capita and per student has gone down.

You're a miserable failure of a government, and this bill is another example of failed government education policy.

1620

**Mr Bisson:** Ditto. That's all I can say. Everything that I wanted to say and then some.

The chief government whip says, "I can't understand why members in the opposition or anywhere would be opposed to this kind of legislation." I want to say, listen, if we're talking about the question of recertification of everyone, if you were to come into this House and say, "We think there's an issue in our education system that when we train plumbers, electricians, lawyers, MPPs and whatever, we need to recertify these people every so often in order to make sure their skill sets are matching the day, to make sure the skill sets they have are current to what's needed today," I can get into that debate. There might be an argument that as a skilled electrician, as a licensed electrician and a licensed technician of electronics, you have to recertify me with some sort of provision. But we're not talking about that.

The Minister of Labour got up before and said, "We do recertify." No, we don't. All I have to do to recertify my licence is to sign a piece of paper and send the government a cheque—I think it's \$125 every three years—to recertify myself as an electrician. There is no recertification for all kinds of other trades and professions. The difference here is you are saying you want to pick on the teachers as a group that you're going to recertify.

My argument is that if we want to talk about recertification overall, there may be an argument, and I think most of the public would say, "Yes, that's an issue I'm prepared to listen to." But when the government comes to me as a member and says, "We've got this great idea for recertification," which in itself may not be a bad idea, "but we're only going to do it to teachers," it tells me you're picking on teachers. I'm sick and tired of wasting our time in this Legislature picking a fight with people who, quite frankly, have got better things to do, and that is to go out and educate our children. After all, that's what this should be all about.

**Hon Mrs Elliott:** I'm pleased to add my voice to this debate and comment on the remarks of my colleague from Peterborough.

When we come to this House, we come with experience from our personal lives and from our communities. I come representing the riding of Guelph-Wellington, I come as the parent of four children who have been through the public school system and are now in post-secondary, and I also come as a teacher. So when our government has embarked upon the very worthwhile activity and goal of improving the public education system to be the best system it possibly can be, I have a great deal of interest in how this file unfolds. On the standardized testing, on the curriculum, on all of the pieces, I have looked with interest as a parent and as a teacher.

Today we are talking in particular about testing. I thought to myself, when we were discussing this as a caucus and as a government, how would I feel were I still in the classroom? I think I would have mixed feelings

perhaps. I was one of those teachers who took countless summer courses and was always trying to learn how to be a better teacher. I found I learned a great deal from other teachers and I also learned a lot from visiting other classrooms. But not all teachers are like that, quite frankly. I don't say that to denigrate teachers. I say that because teachers are very busy folks, and sometimes it's necessary for us to institutionalize ways for folks to be better, in particular in this case, teachers.

The only people who actually sit at the end of the day and evaluate the teachers' performances are the children. They have very little ability, and in fact I would put to you in this House that even the parents sometimes have very little ability, to actually ascertain how well a teacher is doing until perhaps, if things aren't going well, it's too late. I think it is the responsibility of the government to set a stage for the very best teachers to operate in this province, to teach our very precious children, and I think the teacher testing is the way to do it.

**Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's):** I always enjoy hearing the arguments from the government with respect to why it is OK to test teachers while at the same time we are not testing the other professions. I've heard often from the other side the lawyer saying, "Well, I'm tested every day," as if the teachers are not tested in the classroom every day.

It is punitive to test teachers. It's punitive. This is about a failed political war against a profession, to denigrate a profession, because it was going to somehow buy this government votes. We know today from one of many published reports that in fact the public isn't buying this.

We have heard from members of this House already with respect to the information released by the Toronto District School Board to the effect that nobody is buying the argument that teachers need to be tested, that this government is engaging in a constructive exercise by trying to get them tested, and that the repeated announcements and reannouncements, recycled and reused to the extent that it's probably the best environmental effort this government has ever engaged in, that is, their re-announcement policy—it's not being bought by the people of Ontario.

It truly has been one of the saddest legacies of the Mike Harris government, what this government has done to public education, but worst of all, what this government has done to a generation of Ontarians and Canadians who no longer enjoy the profession of teaching. Many Ontarians who might have otherwise entered that profession are now not entering that profession, and hence among other things we have a labour shortage. I say to the government, shame on you, shame on you, shame on you.

**Hon Mr Stewart:** I want to say something to the member from St Paul's. I don't know whether you have children, but if you do and one of your children has difficulty because one of their teachers is not qualified to pass on the information to them, what are you going to do? I'll tell you what you'll do. You'll be the first one to

the board trying to get them either requalified or thrown out, fired. You know it and I know it.

The other person who bothers me very much is we have the member from Windsor-St Clair saying, "Let's throw a bunch more money at them. We need more money. Don't give a darn about the qualifications." More money won't qualify anybody. You know it and I know it. Qualifications are done through testing, through more experience, through more knowledge, through more skills. That's where it is.

I had a lady the other day make a comment to me that they were very concerned about her daughter. The daughter was concerned about passing. Why? Because a couple of her teachers weren't totally qualified in the English language. Why wouldn't we want to improve them, to help them, to make sure they could be better qualified? We're dealing with the future of this province, with our students who will graduate. I want them, in my business or in my community, to be qualified with the skills that are truly necessary to make sure this province continues in the way it should.

I just cannot understand the people across the way who don't want any quality. I know your policies aren't quality, but ours are and we want to continue in the right direction.

**The Acting Speaker:** The floor is now open for further debate.

**Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton):** I am really pleased to enter into this debate because with the word "quality," one of the issues is that you have to understand what quality means before you can actually enact or put into place aspects that are going to provide quality in a system.

I believe the track record speaks for itself. In six years of the Conservatives in this province, they have not, in my view, created better quality education, but certainly they've created more crises. They've certainly added a lot of dollars to partisan advertising. They talk a lot about quality, but I have to say that when you talk about quality education—they love to use the words—quality education doesn't come about simply by the government using the words in its legislation, or by using the words in those expensive \$6-million ads and those brochures.

You don't achieve quality education by those means. In my view, quality education is about good management. This is not what the Conservative government has shown. They're not good managers. But they certainly like to suggest that nobody could take on the teachers, so we have this bully mentality that I hear reiterated in this House too many times. We're not here to take on the teachers; we're here to work with the teachers.

**1630**

It appears to me consistently that this government wants to run the education system from Queen's Park. They want control, but they want to divert the blame. They divert the blame for the mishandling of education policy to the teachers, or they say it's the school boards. They even dare to say all the time that it's the federal government. But they don't take responsibility for their role in education.

I believe the ultimate difference between the Conservatives and Liberal Party is that we understand what quality means. It isn't just about tax cuts, and it isn't just about budget cuts. Neither is it about just adding money to something. Quality education is about teaching the whole person. That's a concept that I know is difficult to understand. It's about teaching the whole person. It's about balance. It's about teaching—I said this the other day—math and science and technology, but also art and music and history and sports. It's the whole person. That's how you shape society. All of this, in my view, creates quality education. But more importantly, it achieves the high standards. Instead, this government has done exactly the opposite.

Another aspect, in my view, about quality education and good management is that you work with all the different sectors. It isn't top-down management. We don't have this dictatorial, "We've got to take these people on because, after all, they have different views than we do." That is not how we should be dealing with education, and that's all I've seen over the last six years. The constant fighting isn't about quality education, but in reality that's what we've done over the last six years.

The turmoil in our education system doesn't speak to quality education. The results, or the lack of results, in our education system speak to the lack of substance behind all the rhetoric on quality. What we find in our schools today is not quality education; it is no flexibility to provide for after-school busing in rural areas.

We talk about quality education. We want students to participate in other activities that make it enjoyable for them to be at school. One of the aspects, of course, is music programs or sports programs after school. In rural areas in my riding, one of the problems is that most of the students are on a bus for one hour, an hour and a half, sometimes even two hours. They need to have an after-hours bus to take them home. We don't have funding for busing, so the students don't have the opportunity, even if the programs are offered, to stay after school because there's no bus. As you know, many times parents today work, or they don't have the possibility to pick the students up. So what do we do? We limit the opportunities that will provide quality education.

What we find in our schools is that there is no room for small schools. That's what we find in this neo-conservative world. We have megacities and megahospitals, and now we have to have megaschools. I have a list of small schools in my area that are 75% or 80% full, but because they only have a capacity of 180 or 200, they have to shut down. We have to now move the students into the bigger schools. We have to try to achieve a 95% capacity, because we now measure education per square foot, as the member for Windsor-St Clair said, the same way we do our penitentiaries. That's not about quality education. I believe the members across must understand that concept, but for some reason they consistently spew out their mantra that is dictated on how they must speak to these matters, and, as you know, the language is always the same.

In my area, every single new school year we're talking about shutting down a school. That's all we seem to see. Parents are fighting to keep them open. There was a meeting last night about shutting down St Joseph's school. It's a small school in the southwest of our area. Again, there is a real diversity of students there. Most of them, by the way, walk to school, but now they're all going to be bused to a larger school. These parents have tried to fight to keep the school open, just like they tried to fight to save Our Lady of Mercy and they tried to do the same for a school out in Watford. Yet what happens? Because there's absolutely no flexibility, we have the one-size-fits-all syndrome when it comes to this funding formula. It's all about savings.

The other day I mentioned that cabinet costs have risen by 116%. Now I understand why. They have to manage all the schools in the system from Queen's Park. You wouldn't want to try to accommodate the realities in the rural areas, because, for goodness' sake, that would mean we'd have to be a little bit more flexible in how we deal with our funding formulas.

We have fewer librarians. You want to talk about quality education? I would just like somebody to explain to me how 95% of schools reported don't have full-time principals and 44% don't have full-time vice-principals. But I guess we don't need that aspect in the schools, according to this government. We don't need the qualified principals or vice-principals.

We have again the larger class sizes. You want to talk about quality education? It's smaller classrooms. Why do people believe that private schools tend to have a higher quality of education? Because there's a smaller ratio of students to teacher. When I've gone to Sarnia-Lambton and gone into some of the schools, I've sat in on grade 12 English with 34 students in the class. It seems that most of the classes that I sat in on had more than what they call their average—because that's a misnomer, as we know. Quality education is about keeping that ratio down, not the average but student-to-teacher ratio. Of course, the average, as you know, is skewed when you have rural and urban together and you try to average out in these huge mega-school boards now and you're averaging out student-to-teacher ratios.

**1640**

I don't know if it's the same with some of the other members in my caucus, but when I hear the word "quality," I just don't equate it to the Conservative government somehow. The words "quality" and "Conservatives" just don't go hand in hand. I say that because of the tremendous amount of instability that I've watched in the education system. We talk about shaping our society, and education does that. Education shapes our society. It's about our economic development. It's about our competitiveness in the global market. It's our brain trust. And yet everything I have seen over and over again in the name of—I will use the quotes—"quality education" does the exact opposite. This is why they have to spend megabucks on partisan ads: they have to convince people of what is not the fact. That's why you advertise. There

doesn't have to be truth in the advertising; you just have to portray an image. It's like getting the cars in the ads. You have the car and you have the really good-looking woman next to it. The idea is, if you buy that car, guess what else you get?

That's what advertising is. It's not about giving facts. I believe that this government has certainly learned how to advertise when it comes to getting their message out, because when you analyze exactly what's done, you see that that isn't the case.

This bill undermines, in my view, the whole concept of what the role of government should be in managing the affairs of this province. I say that because I don't believe that a government is to be there—I'll use the same terminology that the Minister of Labour used, which is, "Nobody wants to take on the teachers." It's as if they're people whom they have to fight with. These are professionals. Teachers were a profession before the Conservatives were in power and they're going to be a profession after the Conservatives are in power. Unfortunately, it has been a painful six and a half years for them, because they have not been treated as a profession; they have been treated as a group of people who have to be controlled.

Again I have to say that when you take a look at quality education, if you really take a look at it—and I believe that you have to have performance evaluations. Performance evaluations should be part and parcel of every sector, because that is the only way that we're going to be able to measure results. The government uses what they call "testing," and the word "testing," in and of itself, implies that teachers aren't professionals. You test students, and you should. Every other profession gets professional performance evaluation. That's how you deal with it. But we use the word "testing." It somehow, to me, suggests that the teachers are students. They have to be tested. That's not what it's about. It's about performance evaluation in their job.

We believe that, but not the way this government is doing it, because this government imposes it as if it becomes a power struggle: "We have to attain this sense of authority." I've heard it over and over: "Nobody wanted to take on the teachers." The Minister of Labour said it again today. "Nobody wants to take on the teachers." How about, let's improve the system and let's have performance evaluations and treat the professionals who work with our students with dignity? How about treating them with respect? And yes, have measures in place. If, in the context of their job, they are not doing it, there should be a way to address that.

There are ways to address it. We talk about quality education and yet we don't have in place now enough resource teachers to deal with those students who can easily fall through the cracks. We can only deal with the extreme end of that spectrum. We can't raise the level of students who need one-on-one, because we now have this inflexible way that we're going to conduct education, and it's by square footage.

One of the things that has been brought to my attention in my riding is the fact that if a student leaves a

school—they're funded I believe at about \$6,000 per student—that school loses \$6,000 in funding. But it doesn't mean that there's \$6,000 less in expenses just because one student leaves. So again there's a skewed sense, in my view. The government doesn't understand how to manage so that the employees—because I believe the government is the manager and the system as an entity of the province should be well-managed, but well-managed means getting the co-operation of the employees who work for you.

You talk to the auto sector, you talk to other industries, and they talk about management, saying that one of the best ways to get not only co-operation but to get productivity and to get—how do I put it?—employee satisfaction is through co-operation. It isn't through fighting, it isn't through, "Well, we have to take them on. We're not afraid to take them on," because you discount the profession, you discount the impact that educators have in the classroom.

The other irony here is that this government has taken public dollars and put them now into private schools, but these systems that are going to enhance quality education in our public system, this skewed sense of what they call teacher testing, why don't they impose them on these other schools that are going to get public funds? Shouldn't the standards apply there? You consistently have this double standard. If you're going to provide public dollars to private education, then private educators should have the same rules imposed on them as they have in public education. I don't understand the rationale, why you would exempt them from that. From grade 1 to grade 8 in private schools, you don't have to be certified to teach; there's no rule that says you do. You don't have to use the curriculum. You don't have to do the testing. But in the public system, this government suggests that they have to consistently micromanage, but that's only used in the public system.

I just want to reiterate something. Quality education is about encouraging and supporting highly motivated professionals. We don't have those motivated professionals, because this government did the opposite. That's what quality education is about. It's about stability and it's about innovation. Quality education—I'll say it one more time—is about teaching the whole person, it's about balance. It's about teaching and educating in all of the different disciplines, not just math and science, but technology, art, music, history, sports—something that this government, in my view, does not understand.

**The Acting Speaker:** Members now have up to two minutes for questions or comments.

**Mr Bisson:** I want to congratulate the member on what I thought was a very well-put-together speech on this particular issue. As I understood it, she makes the argument that I think is quite a good argument, which is, if the government is truly serious about some sort of performance standards when it comes to the ability of teachers to teach, why is it they don't have performance appraisals—because that's what these are, basically—for teachers in the private system? If we're so concerned

about the quality of education of our children, and we want to make sure that the teachers meet a certain standard, and we're using public dollars to pay the teachers and to fund the system, why would we not do the same in what is now a publicly funded private system with Mr Flaherty's tax break that he has given to the—what is that?

**Mr Prue:** It's the wind.

**Mr Bisson:** Wow. There was something buzzing in the back of the building here.

**Mr Prue:** It's the wind.

**Mr Bisson:** Is that what it was? How weird. Anyway, I've got to say this chamber is starting to become a little bit haunted. Some of the noises that came out of the back were kind of weird.

1650

I just say that she makes the point, and I think it's a really good point, that if the government is really serious about doing what is right when it comes to making sure we have good quality assurances when it comes to teachers, we should do that for both private sector teachers and public sector teachers, because at the end of the day, they're both about the same thing: teaching students. If the government has a double standard, then you have to ask yourself, "What's really going on?"

What I've been saying, and what my colleague Mr Prue and others have said, is that this is really about a government that's hell-bent on picking a fight with teachers for the political capital they think they can garner from the public when it comes to fighting with teachers. I say that's wrong, because what we should be about is supporting initiatives to help our kids to get better education, not fighting with teachers for political gain.

**Mr Gill:** It is a pleasure to get into the debate this afternoon. The member for Sarnia-Lambton spoke at length about the different issues, and also the member for Timmins-James Bay.

I was quite surprised at the member for Sarnia-Lambton's saying that because of certain policies of the Harris government, we don't have good professionals. That is quite contrary. We have very good professionals. I just finished having a meeting with some of the teaching professionals, and we have a tremendous amount of talent. Also, the member mentioned something about "quality and Conservative don't go hand in hand." I think that's a lot of baloney.

The member talked about teaching the whole person. What gobbledygook, what a loosey-goosey comment, "whole person." You have to have certain standards. You have to have standardized testing. You have to make sure everybody has the same curriculum and you give them grade 3, grade 6, grade 10, so that you understand exactly where people stand.

You have to have basic skills in math, science and languages. For whatever reason, and I know we need to address it more throughout the country, I don't think people have enough or study enough languages. Certainly we have English and we have French, but if you look throughout the world, I think people have to have, for

better understanding of diversity, more language skills. I do encourage that. I'm very fortunate. I speak about five different languages, and I think it's a good thing to have, and I certainly encourage the teachers and the students, even on their own time. Somebody is going to get up and say, "You know, therefore you should have more money to be spent." That is not the answer. The answer is that we have to understand that we have to do some work. Even at home, we should be encouraging that sort of behaviour.

**Mr Bryant:** I want to join other members in congratulating the member for Sarnia-Lambton for another thoughtful, well-researched, well-organized and well-put submission, not a submission that I think can be easily dismissed by this government.

I was interested to hear the member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale rise in his place. He doesn't dispute the arguments made, but rather speaks to language skills and the need for more language skills. I agree with the member, but I don't think testing teachers is going to increase the linguistic capacity or any other quality measure of education or students in Ontario.

In order to have quality, you have to, at the very least, engage in the kind of management that the member for Sarnia-Lambton was arguing for, not the kind of management this government has demonstrated over the past six-plus years. At the very least, you would think that in order to achieve quality, you wouldn't want to cut public education to the bone.

Let me just speak to the situation in the city of Toronto. I am honoured to be an MPP in the mid-town Toronto riding of St Paul's. This is from a September 2001 report from the Toronto District School Board. They write: "Between 1997 and our projected 2003-04 school year, funding for our schools"—that is, Toronto schools—"will have been reduced by \$400 million dollars, of which \$126 million of reductions still have to be found. This will represent a cumulative reduction in public education spending in the city of Toronto during this period of \$1.4 billion."

**Mr Smitherman:** How much?

**Mr Bryant:** One point four billion dollars.

This government wants quality in education. I suggest to them that they might start by not cutting \$1.4 billion, not wasting their time by testing teachers, but rather by making the appropriate investments and the management that the member for Sarnia-Lambton is advocating.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further questions and comments?

**Mr Smitherman:** It was an excellent—

**Mr Bisson:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: We're on questions or comments. There's a rotation. The member from Beaches-East York was on his feet.

**The Acting Speaker:** If he was, I just didn't see him. If the House is clear that he was on his feet—obviously I wouldn't do that to my own member—it was an oversight. My apologies to the member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale. I give the floor to the member for Beaches-East York.

**Mr Bisson:** We didn't think it was intentional.

**Mr Prue:** I too rise to commend the member for her very thoughtful speech, especially around the whole issue of language skills. I know other members have spoken to that. It's something we as Canadians should be justifiably proud of, since we have people from all over the world who have come to live in Canada, and particularly in Ontario, that there are so many languages spoken. It's one of those things we should pride ourselves on and continue doing. That goes right back to English-as-a-second-language classes and heritage language classes, which unfortunately do not seem to have the same currency or favour in the last number of years, due to cutbacks, as they once did.

I also would like to remark on her comments about performance appraisals. I think that comes right down to the heart of the matter. This isn't just teacher testing; this is a performance appraisal. I think anyone who has ever been a bureaucrat, anyone who has ever worked for a level of government—be it municipal, provincial or federal—or anyone who has ever worked for a large corporation, is used to the term “performance appraisal” and can understand and appreciate what that is. It's a yearly rotation where you go to your supervisor or the manager of the office, someone who directly looks after you and knows the work you do, and you sit down. It can be a pretty nervous experience for some, on occasion, particularly when their performance isn't up to snuff.

It is a direct supervisor who is charged with you who makes the comments, who makes the appraisal, who tells you your strengths and weaknesses and tells you what you need to do to improve. It is not someone from far away. It's not someone from Queen's Park or the minister's office; it's someone who knows exactly what you do and the circumstances in which you do it. That's the kind of appraisal we should be asking for our teachers: someone who is right there and knows the intricacies of that particular school, that community, that neighbourhood.

**The Acting Speaker:** My apologies again to the member for Beaches-East York. I now turn to the original speaker and offer up to two minutes to the member for Sarnia-Lambton to respond.

**Ms Di Cocco:** Thank you, Speaker. In my comments, I may have misspoken if I suggested that school systems don't have professionals. What I meant is that, in my view, the policies of the Conservative government have undermined the professionals in our system. That was what I intended to say.

One of the issues that truly is important is that we work to improve education in this province—we improve education; we improve the quality. We have to create stability. It's done through good management: through management of people, through good management of resources and through good and thoughtful management of change. Under the Conservative government we have had fast-paced changes, changes without resources, changes without proper funding and, more importantly, without enough transition time. And all that has created is a lot of chaos.

When I say “resources,” I mean essential things such as the books for the new curriculum that's been imposed by this government. That is not managing change; that is only reacting to change. There's a difference. Government has to be able to manage thoughtfully if it's going to create a system that's going to work, and this government has created a system that is constantly in chaos, constantly reacting.

As a last example, there was the area of the extra-curricular fiasco. We didn't have a problem in this province, but it was created by this government. They created the problem and then they had to find a solution.

**1700**

**The Acting Speaker:** The floor is now open for further debate.

**Mr Smitherman:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Is a quorum present?

**The Acting Speaker:** Is there a quorum?

**Clerk at the Table (Mr Todd Decker):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** With a quorum now present, we will continue the debate.

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford):** I'm very pleased to join the debate on second reading of Bill 110, Quality in the Classroom Act, 2001. The purpose of our education reform is to set higher standards for student achievement in Ontario and to provide the tools and resources for student success. Excellence in education starts in the classroom with the best possible teachers.

**Mr Bisson:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Just to assist, I would ask the member to back off the mike with his papers because it is distorting the sound. I couldn't hear what you were saying.

**Mr Tascona:** That is why our government has introduced our comprehensive teacher testing program, to ensure that all teachers, both new and experienced, have the capabilities to help our students succeed and achieve higher standards.

We continue to build on this commitment with Bill 110. It has two purposes: first, subject to approval of Bill 110, all new graduates of Ontario faculties of education and all teachers new to Ontario would be required to take the Ontario teacher qualifying test. The passage of the test would be a requirement for becoming a member of the Ontario College of Teachers and receiving a certificate of qualification from that college.

The qualifying test would assess the readiness of teachers to start their professional life and ensure they have the minimum level of knowledge and skills to begin teaching in our schools. That's not unlike what the legal profession goes through. It's purpose and form would be similar to exams administered by other professional regulatory bodies. Development of the test is being supported by consultations with a broad range of education stakeholders, including parents, students, principals, vice-

principles, teachers, trustees, deans of faculties of education and the Ontario College of Teachers.

It is important to note that Ontario is not the only jurisdiction to be moving in the direction of spelling out entrance-to-profession tests. The United Kingdom recently introduced a test for new applicants to the teaching profession. In addition, France, Belgium and Switzerland use civil service exams to evaluate those who wish to teach.

The proposed test in Bill 110 would have questions based on areas of knowledge and skills derived from the standards of practice for the teaching profession established by the Ontario College of Teachers. As you know, Mr Speaker, the opposition parties have voted against many new measures with respect to education reform: new curriculum, standardized report cards and even the College of Teachers with respect to upgrading and enhancing the training of teachers in our profession.

Parents told us that improvement was needed. That's the bottom line. In 1995, when I was running for the first time, parents wanted improvement in the education system. In my riding, we've been very fortunate. Because of the growth, we've had many new schools built under our new standards and also tremendous upgrading of the playgrounds at the existing schools. So the money has been spent, the money is in the system and it certainly is benefiting my riding of Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, based on the equalized formula for students.

Candidate teachers who meet all the requirements for certification, including passing the qualifying test, would be placed on the college's register, which lists its members, their qualifications and their status with the college. In a rapidly changing and increasingly competitive world, the need for quality assurance among all professionals, and especially teachers, is imperative.

The second purpose of Bill 110 is to create a comprehensive performance appraisal system to evaluate teachers on their performance in the classroom. That seems like a fair process in terms of ensuring that they understand and are teaching the curriculum for which they've been hired. The new provincial standards outlined in the legislation would ensure that principals and school boards regularly and consistently evaluate teachers' knowledge and skills. Mandatory professional learning ensures that teachers' knowledge and skills are up to date. Performance appraisal provides the necessary quality assurance that professional learning has been effective. That's not unlike when you're dealing with other professions, like the dental profession and other medical professions, in terms of making sure their members are up to date in their skills and knowledge, especially when you're dealing with a sensitive area where you're providing a public service. What could be more important than making sure the students you teach are getting quality instruction?

Equally important is the way that Bill 110 would bring consistency to the frequency, timing, standards and methods of teacher appraisals across Ontario. While many boards have been developing excellent perform-

ance review practices, few school boards have policies and programs in place to help weak teachers meet the standards they need to achieve. The creation of province-wide standards would clearly be a major factor in ensuring that our teacher appraisal system is fair to all members of the profession.

These are the reasons that the bill would provide for every experienced teacher to have an evaluation year every three years, with at least two evaluations of their classroom performance during that year. New teachers would be evaluated twice a year during their first two years in the classroom. Bill 110 would allow for parent-student input as an integral part of a teacher's performance appraisal. However, parental and pupil comments would not be the sole factor in the unsatisfactory rating of a teacher. An important aspect of the teacher appraisal system is to provide support and facilitate teacher improvement. The point of Bill 110 is not to dismiss teachers but to ensure teaching excellence, and teaching excellence can only benefit the students and the young minds we're trying to educate and bring forth as responsible citizens in our society.

Bill 110 sets clear procedures to be followed if a teacher receives an unsatisfactory performance appraisal. This process could allow school boards to dismiss teachers who continue to receive unsatisfactory ratings after being given the time and support needed to improve their classroom performance. It's important to note that school boards will continue to be required to follow due process when dismissing a teacher.

#### **1710**

Bill 110 also provides safeguards to prevent low-performing teachers from moving from school to school or from board to board to escape accountability for their performance. Before hiring a teacher from another school board, the hiring board would be required to check with the previous board on the teacher's performance. In addition, boards would be required to check with the Ontario College of Teachers to confirm that the teacher is in good standing with the college.

Teaching is a challenging profession. Teachers play a critical role in influencing young minds, helping students reach their full potential and shaping lives for the better. All of us here remember a teacher or more than one teacher who played a critical role in our development. I can say that it is very important for our young people to have teachers as role models who are able to give the instruction that is necessary for those young minds to advance.

Bill 110 is win-win legislation. With the passage of the Quality in the Classroom Act, 2001, parents will know their children are being taught by the most professional teachers in Canada, taxpayers will know they are receiving value for their education dollars, and all Ontarians will know we are moving closer to an education system that is firmly focused on quality, accountability and improved student achievement.

In closing, I think this piece of legislation complements and enhances the reforms that have been brought

forward by this government in improving the standards and the quality of education for the students of this province.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** It doesn't matter to me, but it's going to be one of you.

**Mr Smitherman:** Go ahead.

**The Acting Speaker:** It looks like it's going to be the member for Timmins-James Bay.

**Mr Bisson:** Thank you to the member for allowing me this opportunity.

I just want to say again to the government members that you're trying to mask this as being a measure that the government is going to put in place that's somehow going to really improve the quality of education in Ontario. I look back and I say you guys have it wrong. You haven't quite figured this out. You're saying to us on the one hand that you care about education, but you're going to do what you call performance evaluations with teachers strictly in the public sector. You say nothing of looking at the issue of what happens to teachers who are teaching students in the private sector. Those students are just as important, in my view, as those in the public sector. So there's a bit of a double standard here. You're saying we're going to test teachers only in the public sector; we're not going to do it in the private sector. I say, if you're doing that, then it tells me that you're doing it for reasons other than to give us assurance that we're going to have a better system of education and provide better quality.

Then the member goes on to say, "All these other measures that we've done up to now have also increased the quality of education in the province." One of the members before, I think it was the member for St Paul's, made this point, and I think it's a good one: it's a valid point to make that when we look at the testing that was done to the students through the system at grades 3, 6, and 9, what we're seeing is that the level of success has not gone up during your time in government. In fact, in many cases, it's actually gone down.

So the issue is, is this really about providing better-quality education? I think not, because if you were really serious about that, you'd make this standard apply to everybody in the teaching profession. That's something you're not doing, so I have to believe what this is about is like many of your bills: put out a good line, give a good press communication, another fight with teachers. Let's get back to helping kids.

**Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** I'm pleased to be able to take part in the debate today. I'd like to comment on the remarks this afternoon by my colleague from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, Mr Tascona.

The reforms we've made in education in the province of Ontario, obviously many times they've been controversial. But I'm curious to see how many of those reforms are actually wrong. I don't think any of them are wrong.

As we look toward the future of our province and our country, it's clear that we need a highly skilled work-

force, highly trained people who are able to work in a global economy and able to work with one another across the planet. The teacher testing, or the qualifying test, or the promises we made in the 1999 provincial election are all part of our party's platform to make the education system in our province better.

I think it's clear that although there is still some controversy around this, we are on the right track with teacher testing. I've heard from a number of constituents, teachers and parents and other stakeholders, who would like to see some things changed a little but who clearly are quite pleased with the direction we're going in.

Mr Tascona made a few comments on some of our initiatives, and I'm pleased to be able to make a few other comments and support his here this afternoon.

**Mr Bryant:** I don't support his comments, with all due respect. The member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford is one of the members, also a member of the bar, who I know has said, in defence of testing teachers, "Well, counsel are tested every day," as if teachers are not tested every day. I would ask the member, and I'm interested to hear what he would say in response—he knows very well that in order to become a member of the Law Society of Upper Canada, there are examinations to be written to qualify for the bar, leaving aside the examinations you write to get your LLB, but then that's it. There are no further tests, and he knows that. So why, if there are no further tests for his profession, for which I think we both share a commitment to quality—I would hope so, anyway—would we want to impose that on teachers?

Again, I agree with the comments that have been made by the members for the third party to the effect that, look, this is obviously a political ploy. If the government were committed to quality in education, then it wouldn't have cut \$1.4 billion.

**Mr Smitherman:** How much?

**Mr Bryant:** It's \$1.4 billion, and do you know what? We're just talking about the city of Toronto alone, between 1997 and the present.

You can't take blood from a stone. Testing teachers is trying to distract the public, obviously, from what the government has done miserably, and also from what the government has not done, and that's to make the appropriate investments in public education. A big corporate tax cut in an already competitive field? "Fine," says the government. But cuts to public education? "Also fine." We say that's wrong.

**The Acting Speaker:** There's one further spot left.

**Mr Smitherman:** I'll use this two minutes as a warm-up for my act which will follow. This is like an entr'acte, but that would be gobbledegook, probably, for the member opposite, who doesn't think that theatre ought to be part of the—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Smitherman:** Are you reading this heckle? Did you get your staff to write something down? I've yet to see you say an unscripted word in this place. But if you're able to, that would be terrific.

I want to say in response to the presentation from the member opposite, we hear more of the same from this

government sausage-maker communications machine, which provides to each member the same monotonous drone, on and on.

I say to the members who are here listening and to those people at home: testing, testing, one, two, three. Hello, government, did you get the message? The people are on to you, because they've seen the test scores, they've seen the results, the six lost years, the six lost years of this government now coming home to roost, to see that the results here again fail to match the quality of the government's rhetoric.

I note that the title of this bill is An Act to promote quality in the classroom, but it would be more appropriately titled, "An Act to exacerbate the double standard between the public school system and the private and religious school systems," because here again you have perpetuated the circumstance covered in so many other bills—including one that deals with a mechanism to track down sexual predators in teaching—that does not include the students who are in the private and religious systems. That's a shocking circumstance, and this bill yet again moves along in the same way that this government does. I think that will speak well for itself.

1720

**The Acting Speaker:** Now for up to two minutes to respond, the member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford.

**Mr Tascona:** I'd just like to comment on the members. I appreciate their remarks. I understand they're all well-intentioned.

Just to deal with the member from Timmins-James Bay with respect to standards, the standards for new teachers are very simple: all new graduates of Ontario faculties of education and all teachers new to Ontario would be required to take the Ontario teacher qualifying test and pass it to be certified and qualified. There's no double standard. The member from Simcoe North, who is the parliamentary assistant to education, focused on increasing the quality for teachers. That's what this is all about in terms of enhancing their abilities to teach and support.

The member from St Paul's, his observations: I understand he maybe has been a lawyer; I'm not really sure. Yes, lawyers going into the profession are tested, but the fact is there's also a continuing education requirement which is monitored by the law society, and there are also standards on performance in terms of how they provide their legal work, not only in terms of the quality, but also in terms of their integrity. And if those are lacking, they face the ultimate penalty: the loss of their profession in terms of disbarment.

I think the member opposite should understand that from the legal profession's point of view, and also the other professions that are subject to standardized testing and also continuing education, to make sure they're up to speed, because it's in the public interest to make sure that they provide a quality service. That's what this is all about: the public interest.

The member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale, I can't make any comments because he didn't really say anything worth commenting on.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Is the Minister of Corrections finished?

**Hon Rob Sampson (Minister of Correctional Services):** Yes, he is.

**The Acting Speaker:** That's good. The floor is now open for further debate.

**Mr Smitherman:** It's my great pleasure to be here on Thursday afternoon, the Texas league of members being present, where no great expectations are that any member, least of all me, would be able to hit a ball out of the park. But I am delighted this afternoon to have an opportunity to be here, surrounded by the warm embrace of colleagues opposite, in particular the Minister of Labour. I'm happy to report to him on another matter that is of much interest to him: the city of Toronto is currently considering two shelter proposals for Etobicoke at his request.

I had a chance a minute ago to speak a little bit about the quality of debate in this chamber, and I must say that the Minister of Correctional Services gave an excellent heckle a moment ago, and as one who from time to time tries to make those, I applaud him for it. But I would say that he ought to perhaps muster up just a little objectivity, and I think that he would see that the quality and the energy of the participation in this debate from members on this side of the House is at a far higher level than the other side. That is because that is a government that is out of juice. We see here just one more piece of evidence about the extent to which this government, for two and a half years—since June 1999—has been living on re-treads, re-treads of the stuff that worked early on for them but which no longer cuts slack with the people of Ontario because the rhetoric is of a much higher quality than the results. That is the story of this government with respect to its educational initiatives. The news has come back from the front, and the story on the front lines is that test scores are down, down, down. That is your responsibility and you will bear that.

The Minister of Labour, in an earlier opportunity to speak—he's the chair of the government machismo caucus; not the Mensa caucus, that's ably chaired by someone in the fourth row, the member from Kitchener—went to some length to remind us that this was really just one more opportunity for the Harris government and the Harris-like gang that seeks to replace him, one more right-wing than the next, just one more reminder that when push comes to shove, and with these guys it almost always does, in the absence of really knowing what to do, they resort to only what they know, which is to pick a fight.

I have heard so often in this place and before I got here about how they're doing more with less, but the fact of the matter is that if you really wanted to improve the efficiency of our education system, if you really wanted to address the quality of the outcomes, and similarly our system of health care, then you would take a look at the front-line workers. As an employer, you would say—

**Mr Gill:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Do we have a quorum present?

**The Acting Speaker:** Would the clerks please check for a quorum.

**Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member may continue with his speech.

**Mr Smitherman:** I just want to say how pleased I am that the government members have swarmed in to listen to the quality remarks I'm delivering. I must say to the viewers at home that they need to understand there's a responsibility on the government's part to have 12 members present during debate. When a quorum call occurs, that's because we've fallen below that number. Today we had a quorum call that was initiated by the government because I was getting under their skin, because they didn't like to hear the truth.

The fact of the matter is they don't like to hear that the biggest threat to the public education system in this province is Mike Harris and his band of Tory Lite. No matter which one of them might make the ascendancy to the throne as Premier, rest assured they will wear the responsibility for the chaos and decline they've brought to the system of public education.

I want to complete a thought I started on just before the quorum call, and that is this: if you had the responsibility as a manager, which a government does, for the relationships with valued employees, which by extension our front-line health workers—our nurses—and our front-line education workers—our teachers—are, then you would act as an individual Mr and Mrs Jones or Smith who are sitting at home and watching this in a fashion that your government does not. Instead of, for six years, picking a fight at every opportunity and looking for division rather than bringing people together, you would want to have a motivated workforce.

The chief government whip spoke earlier about his employees who have been with him for 20 or 25 years. I thought he must have been a pretty decent employer. He's a nice man; he must have been a good employer. But it seems that he's out of step with his government, which doesn't apply the principle of having a well-motivated and contented workforce. Instead, they want to have people who wake up every single morning, people charged with the responsibility to take care of our most vulnerable and to teach our children—this government's modus operandi has been to start the day on attack and to hope the teachers and the nurses wake up angry. They have sought to divide them, and Bill 110 is a stunning repeat performance.

1730

This is the government that likes to say, "We're just doing what we said we would do." But I think they all acknowledge that the big—I can't say the word I was about to say. During that great consultation with the people that occurred in June 1999, no information was

provided to tell people that \$500 million a year would be funnelled from the public education system to a voucher program for private and religious schools. I say that is perhaps the strongest piece of evidence yet that the government's fundamental agenda is to destroy the public education system. The test scores reflect that; the decline in school experience for kids reflects that.

I had an opportunity to talk to lots of kids. We all talk about how we're connected to our constituents. But these guys must not talk to the same high school students I spoke to, kids who came out of Jarvis Collegiate after a five-year career in high school with very little good to say about it because of the chaos you deliberately created every single day.

The member for St Paul's did an excellent job of raising the extent to which this government has contributed to the decline of the educational experience for students in the city of Toronto. They just say, "Doing more with less." Eighteen hundred dollars a year less per student: that is the impact of this government's cuts on the quality of education for the kids I have the responsibility of representing.

I want to say that in the face of all the government has done, the indefatigable spirit of the people of Toronto Centre-Rosedale lives on. We're going to work around you and over you and above you. I know that the teachers who teach at Park school in Regent Park, which on November 17 will be adorned with the name Nelson Mandela school—he will be there. I know that those teachers wake up every single morning with the best interests of those kids at heart, and I know that members opposite don't. They wake up every single morning trying to see how they can further destroy the system of public education, as the minister who's here, now the Minister of Natural Resources, set out to do in his widely publicized video. But we're going to work against them.

Ainsworth Morgan, a terrific guy, recently returned to Regent Park, where he grew up, after getting his education and playing for a couple of years, I think, for the Toronto Argonauts. He's come back to Regent Park to help educate those kids, to work with those kids. He's an example of the kind of teachers we have, that we're able to attract in the urban core of the city of Toronto. I'm very proud of those teachers, and I'm very proud to stand with them against this government.

The last comment I want to make is to the member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale, who mocked the member for Sarnia, who spoke about the need to create a whole person. He referred to that, I think, as "gobbledegook." The fact of the matter is that one of the areas of significant decline as a result of this government's budget cuts is in things like music programs. The effect on our civilization over time from things like that will be dramatic.

**The Acting Speaker:** It's now time for questions or comments.

**Mr Dunlop:** This is a good guy.

**Mr Prue:** I hope to be a good guy. Thank you very much for those comments.

One of the statements you made in your quite eloquent—I don't want to call it a diatribe—but very forceful comments, was about the students and about the chaos in the school. Quite frankly, I think that has been part of the legacy of the government.

When you talk to students who have been through the system in the last five years in high school they don't have the same general comments as if you'd talked to students who came immediately before them. I hope the next set of students don't have the same sort of life experiences with teacher strikes and disruptions in the classroom and cutbacks and no textbooks. I think that all too often we forget that it's not about testing teachers, but that we need to provide for the students. That's the important thing, the provision for the students.

The second element you talked about is the pride of teachers. I think we all in this room have teachers whom we were very proud of. I just want to remind the government members opposite that these were the same teachers who did not have teacher testing. We remember those good teachers. They were not subject to teacher testing, but they were good teachers all the same.

I ask all of you to think back through all of your public school days and your high school days, even though, like me, they were a long time ago, and think whether you actually had a bad teacher. I have sat here throughout this whole debate trying to remember my teachers from kindergarten right through to university and whether I ever actually had one who did not care and who did not contribute in some way to my education and my well-being and the fact that I am here today. I cannot think of a single one who failed. I cannot. I ask you to think about whether or not they failed, because if none of them failed you, then why are we doing this?

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** Let me just talk, firstly, about the member opposite and the quorum situation. It's true: the government has a responsibility to keep quorum in this House of 12 members. What I'm finding more and more often is that every time the member gets up to speak, it's our responsibility to have all 12 members here. Why? Because he can't seem to get any of his own caucus in there to listen to him speak. That's kind of difficult. We always expect at least somebody to come in to listen to Mr Smitherman talk about the oratory of wisdom that he—we welcome every Thursday afternoon, these Torontonians who sit around this place, most of us, and 905ers. So I might add, I wouldn't mind a little help next time, George, with the quorum thing. Bring a couple of your friends in and—oh, all your friends are here from your caucus. OK. I just wanted to get that clear so we can get the quorum thing straight. I appreciate that.

Let's talk about education just quickly in the last minute or so. I don't believe for a moment that anyone in this House wants to build a public education system that doesn't work. I think we all want an education system that works. The disagreement we have is on what we institute. I do take some exception to the member op-

posite complaining, suggesting that we're trying to tear down the system. We're not. We just happen to believe in teacher testing. We happen to believe in different things than you happen to believe in.

I've got two kids in the public school system, and they've been in the public school system since they started school. One's in grade 9; one's in grade 7. I want a good public school system and I believe this makes for a better one, so I am a little disenchanted when I hear the member opposite suggesting that all we want to do is wreck the public education system. It makes no sense. I want a good system for my kids to go to school in. I think we should stop that, because all we're trying to do is build a better system. You just happen to think the system would be better in a different way than I do.

**Mr Bisson:** On the issue of teacher recertification, the point I heard the member make and that I think is a point we need to take into account is that if we're going to get into a debate in this Legislature about how we need to recertify various professions—for example, we think architects should be recertified every so often; we think lawyers should be recertified; we think accountants should be recertified; we think electricians and plumbers and various tradespeople need to be recertified—that's a debate that I'm prepared to get into. I would argue with the government that there may be some value in doing that.

For example, I'm a tradesperson who went through the electrical apprenticeship system almost 20 years ago now. If I were to try to go back into the trade today, compared to what it was the last time I worked in it, which was about 15 years ago, there would be a huge gap in my skills and knowledge to be able to perform the job adequately. So there is an argument, I would argue, for having real recertification of trades and professions. I think that's a debate all of us are prepared to get into.

1740

The difficulty I'm having with this debate is that we're saying there is only one class of individual in our society that we believe as a Legislature needs to be recertified, and those are teachers. I say this is nothing more than a bill this government has put forward to try to garner public support by way of votes by saying, "We're going to pick another fight with teachers."

If we want to talk about recertification, let's talk about it generally, about how we're going to do that in various trades and professions that we as a province have control over. For example, in most of the skilled trades, such as electrical, plumbing and mechanical—all of those trades—they are trades directly certified by the province of Ontario. I'm prepared to get into the debate of, should we recertify electricians every three years or every five years? Should we recertify teachers? I'm prepared to get into that debate, but I'm not prepared to get into this debate when we only have one class of people that we're going to recertify. I'll speak to that a little bit later.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I think we recognize that quality in the classroom is important, and nobody in this House is going to quarrel with that. When speeches are made in the House about it, we have to think about how this affects members of the teaching profession, whether they happen to be in private schools or in public schools, for instance.

We would assume, now that this government has made a choice to indirectly fund private schools, that it would make all the rules that apply to publicly funded schools the same as rules that apply to private schools where there's public funding given indirectly. That would make all kinds of sense. In this legislation, my understanding is that's not the case because there may be a significant number of people in the private schools who are not certified teachers.

You will recall there was a previous piece of legislation the government brought forward dealing with sexual misconduct within the teaching profession in the public school system. I noticed that did not apply entirely to the private school system, yet this government has chosen to provide funding to private schools in this province through a sort of voucher system that they have. If they want to be consistent, I think they have to have the same rules wherever there happens to be public funding in existence.

Second, I don't think there's anybody in this legislature who would believe that members of the teaching profession should not, as they come into the profession, be prepared for it, should not be properly certified. People believe that. I think what we have seen within the teaching profession are people who are justifiably suspicious whenever this government brings legislation in as to the motives the government may have in that regard, and that comes from a significant history of confrontation with members of the teaching profession.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr Smitherman:** I can't say I'm surprised that I've been unable, through the course of this debate, to hold the limited attention span of the Minister of Labour, my friend from the riding of Etobicoke Centre, which is my home riding. When I think about educational experiences, I had the opportunity in my life to share a home room seat—no, I didn't share the seat—to sit side by side with Kathleen Stockwell, and I'll tell you something: the education experience I had at good old Burnhamthorpe Collegiate in Etobicoke outweighs the quality of the education experience had by most of the OAC students I've had a chance to speak to who just left Jarvis Collegiate. That is the indictment of your government.

You can say I use language that is inappropriate, but I'm someone who believes fundamentally in the public education system as one of the single most important ingredients that brings our multicultural society together. I had the opportunity in my riding to witness Black History Month interpreted by white kids and Asian kids.

That's the kind of experience that's in the public education system. So when I see a government that acts on the basis, I think, of a public opinion poll and certainly not on the basis of any commitment they made during an election campaign to channel 500 million bucks out of the public education system in favour of the private and religious system, then I believe I'm on pretty good ground to draw the conclusion that the efforts initiated by the former Minister of Education, now the Minister of Natural Resources, which was to create a crisis in education, is in fact the government's modus operandi. We see here yet again today, in this bill, the creation of a double standard: one set of protections in one system that does not translate to the other. I say with all due respect to the member opposite, that is wrong, and you will pay.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you. The floor is open for further debate.

**Mr Bisson:** I have only 10 minutes at this point to respond and to give comments on this bill. It's rather unfortunate that we've changed the rules of the House to the point that members are not able to participate to the degree that they would like to, because there are a number of issues that I would like to be able to lay out in my presentation on this particular bill that I think are important to this debate.

Let me just put it straight out: should we have a system by which we check teachers' qualifications to teach in the province of Ontario? I generally say yes. Should we have a method by which to make sure we do basically what are teacher evaluations or skills evaluations of various workers across the province of Ontario? I think generally that's a good idea. I can understand the rationale behind the government wanting to do teacher evaluation. I think there's some benefit to that.

Generally, if we were to look at a system of re-evaluation of the various people who work in professions and trades in the province of Ontario, who happen to be certified by way of the provincial Legislature, then I would say we're on to something. As a person who ran a small business and also as a person who worked as a chief steward inside fairly large organizations, I understand the value of a human resources department every year coming back to its employees, sitting down, doing an evaluation and saying, "OK, you've been here for a year. Let's see how your year went." You're evaluating the work that the individual has done, making recommendations on how they can do their job better and then having some sort of follow-up process to make sure that you give the employee some support to be able to go forward and do better the next time, and every year or two coming back with some mechanism of re-evaluation.

I think that's a debate that, quite frankly, all sides of the House can agree on. I can't believe that the Conservative caucus would be opposed to the idea of having real types of re-evaluation for people who we certify, as the Legislature, in either trades or professions in the province of Ontario.

I can tell you, as a New Democrat, I don't have a difficulty with that. In fact, the Royal Commission on Learning, which was put in place when we were in government, came back with a recommendation to do exactly this. The problem I had at the time with the recommendation of our own commission was we were looking specifically at teachers, and I feel you can't scapegoat. You can't go to one class of worker in the province and say, "We think it's of paramount public importance to go back and to re-evaluate and recertify you, but we're not going to do it to anybody else." That's the problem I've got with this legislation.

Should we be checking and rechecking the teachers' ability to deliver the text and deliver the curriculum in the classroom? Yes. I have no argument with that. Should we have a system of re-evaluating the skills of teachers? I have no argument. I agree fundamentally with the idea.

The problem I have in the application of this law is that we're only doing it to one class of worker in Ontario. And you know as well as I do, anybody who follows mildly or closely or even in a more strict sense the decisions of the Supreme Court of Canada and the decisions of the human rights tribunals, that once you get into the process of treating people differently, in other words, one class of person is treated differently than the other, it raises an issue of discrimination.

I know that some people on the other side will say, "Well, no, we don't see this as discrimination; we see it as bringing one class of workers up." And I say not. What you're basically doing here is you're saying, "The only people we're going to recertify are teachers."

My argument as a New Democrat is, if we want to get into re-evaluation and retesting or whatever term you want to use, let's do it to the various classes of people that we have control of in this Legislature: skilled trades and other professions. I think that would be a debate that makes some sense. Why not have some sort of a process where the government has a program where we can assist employers to do re-evaluation of workers in our own workplace so that we're able to learn as employers and as people responsible for training what is not going on right with those employees so that we're able to bring their skill levels up. As a debate, I think that makes some sense. But when you come here and say, "We're only going to do it to teachers," I've got to say to myself, "Why just teachers?"

1750

The reason, I think, is very simple. This government has, over and over again, tried to pick fights with the profession of teaching in the province of Ontario. For what reason? I think they're varied. I think one of them, quite frankly, is they love fighting with teachers because they see teachers as a privileged lot within our society. A lot of people in our society are somewhat jealous of teachers because of this supposed special arrangement they've got as far as their contractual obligations under the collective agreements when they teach, having

summers off and Christmas off and March break off. Some parents and some people out there feel a little bit jealous of that, so the government is trying to insert itself into that debate, saying, "We're on your side, taxpayers of Ontario. We're going to go out and we're going to bang those teachers on the head."

It doesn't do anything to elevate the standard. It doesn't do anything to increase the quality of education to the children within the public system. I argue that if you want to do this, do it to all individuals over whom we have control as this Legislature and let's not do it to one class of persons. If you do, then I believe you're getting into the issue of a certain amount of discrimination. I don't know if there is a basis for a discrimination case here but it would be interesting to see what more learned minds on the bench would have to say on that. But at the very least, let's not go ahead and do something that just targets teachers, because other than that, I think it becomes an exercise in teacher-bashing.

What are the kinds of things we should be doing? The Minister of Labour got up a little while ago and said, "I believe in the public system." I have great respect for what he said. "I've got a child in grade 9; I have another one in grade 7," and as a parent, he wants to make sure that those children have a good experience in school and that those children are given the best quality of education we can afford as taxpayers of the province of Ontario. In some way or other, we need to make sure we get the best bang for our buck.

As a New Democrat I respect what he says on that point, because as a parent whose children have now gone through the public system—one has now graduated three years of college and two years of university and the other one's in university—I can very well understand what the minister is trying to say. But the way we do that, I believe, is not by way of doing this. I think there are other things we have to do.

I'm not saying that we should coddle teachers, but the point I make here is this: we should give the teachers the respect they deserve as professionals who teach our children. We should make sure that we properly fund our schools so that schools have the money necessary to be able, through the funding formula, to provide the types of programs that are necessary for the child's education.

I am really upset about some of the decisions that school boards have had to make because of the new funding formula—now no longer new—that the Tories put in place some years ago, because now they're having to make choices within school boards about which programs they pull back on. For example, in the city of Toronto many of the programs that are necessary to build tolerance and understanding between the races are now being taken away.

I think that's wrong. I think as a society we should be promoting those types of programs because our society is a very diverse society—culturally, linguistically and by way of race—and we need to be able to get people to see

each other for what they are, other human beings, so that we can find ways of being able to live together. I think, in the system of public education, we need to look at a system that tries to focus on the positive and those things that we're able to do to give students the kind of education they need.

I say to the government members across the way, by way of wrap-up, that I don't disagree with the fundamental principle of recertifying teachers and retesting teachers. The idea is not a bad one when it comes to its concept. But when you come into this Legislature and say, "I am only going to do it for teachers and not for other people who are out there whom we have authority to license by way of diploma or by way of certification," I say to you that I have a problem, because I see you treating two different classes of people in a different way, and to me that's fundamentally wrong. We should not be doing that.

The only other thing I would say to the members with regard to this particular initiative is, I have to wonder if it hearkens back to comments that were made by the Minister of Education of the day, one Mr Snobelen, back

in 1995, who said, I remember, "What we need to be able to do in this province is to create a crisis in education in order to be able to justify the type of ideological changes that the PCs want to do in education."

I hearken back to that comment. I look at this legislation, I look at other legislation that you put in place before, and I would say that if anything had happened to Mr Snobelen back then, it's that he should have been fired from cabinet for having divulged what was basically a cabinet secret at the time, because certainly that's what the government proved by way of its actions when it came to what the education agenda was for his government.

**The Acting Speaker:** It now being close to 6 o'clock, this House will stand adjourned until Monday at 1:30.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: It's not 6 o'clock. It's five to 6, Mr Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** It's four minutes to 6, and the former Speaker would know that the beginning of the two-minute responses must be completed before we go, and the discretion is with the Chair.

*The House adjourned at 1756.*

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