



Legislative Assembly
of Ontario
Second Session, 37th Parliament

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

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Monday 7 May 2001

Lundi 7 mai 2001

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

Copies of Hansard

Information regarding purchase of copies of Hansard may be obtained from Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

Renseignements sur l'index

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7410 ou le 325-3708.

Exemplaires du Journal

Pour des exemplaires, veuillez prendre contact avec Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311, ou sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 7 May 2001

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 7 mai 2001

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

WEARING OF PINS

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: A project has been developed in Brant, through Rhonda Hertel of the Brantford Nova Vita, to raise the profile of our fight against domestic violence. This project been affirmed by all of the province of Ontario. I seek unanimous consent to wear the daisy pin for the month of May.

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

I thank the member.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

RURAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): It will come as no surprise to members of this Legislature that there is a very serious difficulty—in fact, it's a crisis—facing many communities, large and small, across Ontario in terms of getting and keeping family practitioners. At last report, I am told there are over 100 communities in southern and northern Ontario that do not have an adequate number of primary care or family physicians.

I want to draw to the attention of this Legislature today a wonderful part of my constituency, the Bromley-Whitewater, Cobden-Beachburg area of central Renfrew county, where we have today over 8,000 people, many of them older, all of them without the benefit of public transport, and none of these people has in their community—and the community might be Beachburg, it might be Cobden, it might be Foresters Falls, it might be La Passe, it could be Douglas—a resident full-time family practitioner. In fact, we have two physicians coming in from Shawville, Quebec, to meet the community needs.

There is a wonderful group of people, the Whitewater-Bromley Community Health Centre group—ably led by people like Dave Shields, Liz Cobb, Bonny Johnson and Dave Stewart, to name but four—who have been working very diligently and creatively to draw to the government of Ontario's attention the urgent and pressing need to respond with funding for a community health centre to that part of the Upper Ottawa Valley.

I am here today to support their request and to underline the urgency of this matter affecting so many of my constituents.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): I would like to introduce Mr Mike Murphy, vice-president of Management and Training Corp, the company which has been selected to partner with the government on the operation of the Central North Correctional Centre at Penetanguishene in my riding of Simcoe North. Mr Murphy is in the audience.

Management and Training Corp operates 13 correctional facilities and 23 Job Corp Centres in the United States, Australia and the Marshall Islands. MTC has a long history in training and rehabilitation, which they have put to excellent use in their correctional facilities. They offer extensive personnel development programs in areas like substance abuse, life skills, anger management and crisis intervention, to name a few.

Public safety is at the forefront of our government's work to transform the Ontario correctional system. This new facility is the cutting-edge example of this. All inmate-occupied areas are surrounded by a 16-foot fence topped with razor ribbon. All doors, windows, locks and perimeter walls are built to maximum security standards. The most advanced security technology is used throughout this facility, which is built in a pod design so that inmate movement is limited and safety is achieved for both correctional staff and the public. These security features and the reputation of Management and Training Corp will make this facility a success.

The government continues to be committed to ensuring that the tough performance standards we have established for Ontario's correctional facilities are met regardless of who is operating these facilities. It is important, therefore, to stress the word "partner" in this announcement, since our government will continue to play a strong role in running and monitoring this ultra-modern, ultra-safe facility. We believe that MTC will meet our tough standards and at the same time help us fulfill our commitment to the people of Ontario.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): One of the truly alarming realities of the past 10 years has been government's continuing decline in

support for Ontario's community colleges. The sad fact is that while enrolment has increased by 35% over that time period, the per student funding provided by the province has actually decreased by 40%, leaving Ontario's college students the most poorly funded in the country.

This is particularly frustrating for Confederation College in Thunder Bay. While the college has been a remarkable success story, graduating 20,000 students over the past 30 years, the vast majority hailing from northwestern Ontario, the college is now facing critical decisions in order to balance its budget. Unless improved funding is forthcoming in this week's budget—funding that recognizes the \$1.7-million shortfall between basic needs and the presently anticipated funding—the college may be forced to eliminate their deficit by cancelling programs, raising tuition fees and eliminating several key staff positions.

Any or all of these options can be avoided if the province recognizes the dreadful impact their yearly cuts in funding have had on this vital educational institution, cuts that have totalled over \$17 million since 1994, resulting in a 40% loss of full-time staff.

Today I'm calling on the Minister of Finance to acknowledge the need for improved funding for Confederation College in Wednesday's provincial budget. I trust, Minister, that you recognize that Confederation College is one of the key contributors to the sustainability and growth of the region. But in order for it to continue to grow, the province must not allow it to fall further behind. We hope, Minister, that you'll recognize that need on Wednesday.

EDUCATION WEEK

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): Today marks the start of Education Week in Ontario, an annual celebration that gives schools across our province the opportunity to showcase their students' talents and recognize the past year's achievements.

This year's Education Week theme is "Excellence in school performance, excellence in student learning." It's a theme that encapsulates our government's commitment to education reform. This government knows that our public education system has much to be proud of. Excellent and committed teachers, staff, parents and volunteers directly contribute to the quality of education in our schools across Ontario, like the new school located in my riding, Durham: St John Bosco Catholic school in Oshawa.

In today's world, education is the key to success. It gives young people the knowledge and skills needed to compete in the global economy. Education helps them become responsible and active citizens. It's one of the keys to Ontario's prosperity.

Just two weeks ago, students from John M. James public school in Bowmanville participated in a nationwide event called Canadian National Marsville Link-up Day. This Internet event was designed to teach students how to apply their knowledge, imagination, communi-

cation and technical skills with others across Ontario and indeed Canada.

Our student-focused education funding, the curriculum, student assessment and safe schools will help to ensure that we achieve excellence in school performance and student learning. Today, at the start of Education Week, my colleagues and I pledge our continuing commitment to ensuring that our students get the best possible education. I would like to thank our teachers, parents and students for their committed search for excellence.

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): I'd like to provide the Minister of Health a reality check regarding the nursing situation reflected in my riding and across this province. I received this handwritten letter from a registered nurse who works in the emergency ward at the Sarnia General Hospital. This letter describes a situation that has been compounded by the Harris government policies on hospital restructuring. She writes:

"Help! My ship is sinking and I need a life preserver. I work as a registered nurse in the emergency department at the Sarnia General Hospital.

"The lack of beds for our admitted patients is exhausting our own department's resources. Staff are working extra long hours and extra shifts to care for the overflow.

"Not only is patient care and safety suffering, but also the nurses can't keep treading water. They're all too tired.

"I have never been this dissatisfied in my nursing career. In 1995 I was laid off due to bed closures. With my American licence I worked for a short time in the US. My philosophy is that, if you're not happy, do something to change it. Does this mean that I have to leave work in Ontario again? I hope not. Hopefully this letter will help bring about improvements. I'd like to stay put in Ontario, but I'm ready to go. Thank you."

Yet another nurse leaves Ontario.

1340

LABOUR POLICY

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): The real games being played at Casino Niagara are the games being played by this government in its attack on the security guards at Casino Niagara, who in February of the year 2000 organized themselves into a collective bargaining unit of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union.

This government, with its condemnatory philosophy of workers and their trade unions, has blocked that trade union's effort to represent those workers and has effectively barred those workers from engaging in any collective bargaining by using the Alcohol and Gaming Commission as a bar to them being certified as a union and to having bargaining rights with the management there.

We're talking about in excess of a year now that this government has been playing games with these

workers—this government, Mike Harris and the Tories, demonstrating that they don't like working people to begin with, that they like low-income working people even less, and that they, the Tories of Ontario, despise trade unions and their efforts to give working people like the security guards at Casino Niagara a modest right and a modest level of control over their workplace so that their lives can be safer, their jobs can be more secure, and they can be healthier, contributing members of the workplace and the community.

This government has been less than candid, less than straightforward to these workers and to the community. It's about time they understood that there's going to be a huge price to pay.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS WEEK

Mr Frank Mazzilli (London-Fanshawe): This is the first day of Emergency Preparedness Week in Ontario. From May 7 to 13, communities throughout Ontario will participate in activities to increase awareness of emergency preparedness. Emergency Measures Ontario coordinates activities on behalf of the Ministry of the Solicitor General.

This year's theme is "Reducing the risk—toward safer communities in the 21st century." It means that everyone—government, industry and individuals—can contribute to community emergency preparedness and help increase public safety.

Six Ontario communities, including my home town of London, Barrie, Cornwall, Hamilton, Port Hope and Thunder Bay, have earned special distinction from the province under the government's partnerships toward safer communities program.

Emergency Measures Ontario and the office of the Ontario fire marshal launched this program last year to improve public safety in Ontario. The program is designed to encourage communities and industries to develop a plan to prevent and deal with emergency situations involving hazardous materials. No community is immune from disaster. Recent evacuations in Toronto and Ottawa have brought this message home. Everyone has an important role to play in keeping our communities safe.

I invite all members of this House to join me in recognizing the vital contributions that our emergency service providers make in our province.

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): Almost two years ago, with people in 102 communities across the province unable to get a family doctor, the Harris government sent out a fact finder to see if there was a doctor shortage. Dr McKendry said we needed at least 1,000 doctors. Almost a year and a half ago, with people in 109 communities now unable to get a family doctor, the government set up an expert panel to look at how to deal with the doctor shortage.

The government has still not released the report of its experts, but late last month the minister at least acknowledged there is a problem. The minister said his government was committed to the development of a new medical school in the north, but he gave no timelines, no money and no indication of whether there would be any first-year medical school spaces.

The minister also announced that his government would streamline the process for accepting foreign-trained physicians. The question is, when? The College of Physicians and Surgeons gave government a plan for speeding up the licensing of foreign-trained doctors almost a year ago. All it needed was some funding for a training and assessment program. We could have had new doctors fully licensed and out in communities practising medicine six months ago if the government had acted last July. So what's the delay now? Why no details, why no dollars, why no timeline for getting started and why still no indication that this government is ready to fund new medical school spaces?

The Harris government needs to understand the absolutely urgent need for action. We have already had more than two solid years of delay while the problem of doctor shortages reaches truly critical proportions. The expert panel report must be released today. The government must announce that the College of Physicians and Surgeons' proposal for licensing foreign-trained physicians will be put in place immediately and the government must tell us this week how many new medical school spaces will be up and ready for this September and where the new spaces will be. There is no time and no excuse for any further delay.

ACADEMIC TESTING

Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): Once again I would like to recognize the students, parents and educators of Waterloo-Wellington for their achievements with Ontario's literacy tests for grade 10 students. Each of the school boards that I'm privileged to represent has provided me with information outlining successes and plans to continue to improve student and school achievement.

The Waterloo public school board exceeded provincial averages with notably high results at Elmira District Secondary School and Waterloo-Oxford District Secondary School in Wilmot township. Students at these schools were among the region's top achievers.

The Waterloo Catholic school board has captured the spirit of ongoing improvement and is undergoing a thorough analysis of how students approach the test and how to improve the process, along with parents and teachers, so that students have the skills they need to function effectively in a more complex working environment.

The Upper Grand school board has advised me that 75% of their secondary schools surpassed the provincial average. They are committed to ongoing improvement in all schools, and for students who may be unsuccessful on the test, they are putting in place remedial efforts to see

that those who must retake it can do so with confidence and skill.

Our Wellington Catholic school board also achieved well above the provincial average. I would like to quote the board's director of education, Don Drone, who said, "These tests have helped us improve student achievement. Each year, our grade 3 and 6 students show improvement on their tests. This is the first time for this test. We expect to see improvement in future years."

On that very positive note, I commend the trustees, board officials, teachers, students and parents for putting quality first and putting students first.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Just before we continue, we have in the east public gallery Ed Philip, the former member for Etobicoke-Rexdale, who was a member of the 32nd, 33rd, 34th and 35th Parliaments. Would all members please welcome our colleague.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY AND SUPPORT ARREARS ENFORCEMENT AMENDMENT ACT, 2001

LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES OBLIGATIONS FAMILIALES ET L'EXÉCUTION DES ARRIÉRÉS D'ALIMENTS

Mr Wettlaufer moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 40, An Act to amend the Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act, 1996 / Projet de loi 40, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1996 sur les obligations familiales et l'exécution des arriérés d'aliments.

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

The member for a short statement?

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre): Recently, a Divisional Court ruled that the Family Responsibility Office does not have the authority to collect support payments arrears accumulated when families are opting out of using the FRO. While this was created by a loophole in the existing legislation, I feel that the decision is wrong for those recipients. I firmly believe that when an individual fails to live up to a support agreement, the children of this province and their families should not be made to suffer. That is why my bill would specifically make all support payments arrears from the opt-out period enforceable by the Family Responsibility Office.

I trust that all members of this House will join me in doing the right thing and help children and families receive every penny they are entitled to.

1350

DAY NURSERIES AMENDMENT ACT, 2001

LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES GARDERIES

Mr Lalonde moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 41, An Act to amend the Day Nurseries Act to allow up to seven children to be cared for in rural areas without requiring a licence under the Act / Projet de loi 41, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les garderies afin d'autoriser, dans les régions rurales, la garde de sept enfants au plus sans devoir obtenir un permis prévu par la Loi.

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

The member for a short statement?

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): The purpose of the bill is to exempt day nurseries and private home daycare agencies that provide care for no more than seven children from the licence requirements of the act if the nurseries or agencies are located in a rural area or in towns and villages with a population of fewer than 3,500.

OAK RIDGES MORAINÉ CONSERVATION, PROTECTION AND PROMOTION ACT, 2001

LOI DE 2001 SUR LA PRÉSERVATION, LA PROTECTION ET LA PROMOTION DE LA MORAINÉ D'OAK RIDGES

Mr Colle moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 42, An Act to conserve and protect the Oak Ridges Moraine by stopping urban sprawl and uncontrolled development and promoting recreational, commercial and agricultural activities that are environmentally sustainable / Projet de loi 42, Loi visant à préserver et à protéger la moraine d'Oak Ridges en mettant fin au mitage et à l'aménagement désordonné et en favorisant des activités récréatives, commerciales et agricoles soucieuses de l'environnement.

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

The member for a short statement?

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): As you know, the Oak Ridges moraine is a jewel that stretches from King City to Cobourg. This bill asks for an immediate freeze on development on the moraine until a provincial conservation and protection plan is enacted, based on the 1994 guideline. It also asks that the provincial government promote and encourage local recreational, commercial and agricultural activities that are ecologically sustainable and compatible with the moraine.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): Mr Speaker, I'd ask for unanimous consent to move this bill forward to pass second reading. I'd ask for unanimous consent so that this bill and my bill, Bill 29, can pass

second reading so that they can go into hearings right away, since both these bills have been before us before.

The Speaker: The member has asked for unanimous consent for the bills to proceed to second reading. Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I was given a copy of a statement that was to be delivered by the Minister of Northern Development and Mines with respect to promoting growth among all regions and industries in Ontario's far north. It goes on to outline some alleged initiatives. Now I've been asked to give this statement back, and I'm told there is going to be another statement. I've now been handed another one. Is the minister going to be doing a statement today on this and, if so, which statement reflects government policy?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader): It's my understanding, in the interests of keeping all members of this House up to date, that the minister did want to make a last-minute change in the statement. So there will be a statement going forward today and I think if you listen to the minister it will be very clear what the clarification is.

Mr Duncan: Mr Speaker, on a point of order: It must be an oversight on the government's part, but earlier today the Minister of Education made a major retreat on their education policy and we thought the minister would want to do a statement about that in the House. I seek unanimous consent to ask the Minister of Education to address the government's retreat on education funding.

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

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Hon Brian Coburn (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs): This government recognizes that Ontario's rural communities and the northern and eastern regions of this province still do not share equally in the benefits of our strong economy. We are committed to restoring this balance so that no matter where you live in this great province, opportunity is accessible.

We have been working toward that goal since 1995, when the Mike Harris government was first elected to office, and we have accomplished a great deal in that time. We have introduced a series of initiatives that encourage the creation of partnerships across sectors, across communities, across regions; partnerships that encourage individuals, businesses, organizations, associations and communities to invest in their own futures.

Programs such as Grow Ontario, the rural job strategy, the rural youth job strategy and, most recently, healthy futures for Ontario agriculture have shown just how effective this approach can be.

Since 1995, approximately one quarter of a billion dollars—\$250 million—has been invested in growing the economy of rural Ontario. Well over 20,000 new jobs and opportunities have been created outside our cities and urban centres, and there is still much more to do.

That is why I'm announcing today the details of our government's plan to promote economic growth among all regions and all industries, one of the 21 steps that the government of Ontario proposes to take to meet the challenges and make the most of the opportunities that await us in the 21st century.

To build on regional economic strengths and to help communities reach their economic potential, the government will introduce pilot regional economic development resource jump teams. These teams will help communities take advantage of emerging opportunities and strengthen their local economies.

Our government will study the Quinte Business Development Centre as a province-wide model for regional centres that can improve access to business and economic advisory services in rural Ontario. Our government will work with Ontario's farmers and agri-businesses to develop a made-in-Ontario solution to the challenge of maintaining our agricultural competitiveness in the global marketplace.

We are acting on the report of the Task Force on Rural Economic Development—led so ably, I might add, by my parliamentary assistant, Dr Doug Galt—to ensure that all parts of Ontario, including our rural communities, the northern and eastern regions of this province, share equally in the benefits of a strong economy.

We are also acting to make certain that our farmers and agri-businesses not just maintain but in fact strengthen their competitive position in the global marketplace. We'll do that by working with our agri-food industry to develop and implement a made-in-Ontario approach to address the vagaries of the marketplace and the whims of Mother Nature. Farmers who enjoy some measure of income stability can afford to look for new opportunities, can afford to look to the long term.

Both our farmers and our food processors have told us through our consultations that they understand the benefits to be realized by modernizing Ontario's food safety laws. Not only will consumer confidence be enhanced, so too will their competitive position in the global marketplace. They are ready to work with us to take the steps that will safeguard Ontario's share of that global market by making sure Ontario's food products are of an even higher quality and come with even greater assurances of their safety.

Our government will introduce legislation that will allow for the modernization of Ontario's food safety laws and regulations in order to continue to protect consumers while ensuring access to markets.

1400

It is a broad-reaching and ambitious plan, and will require a multi-jurisdictional approach if it is to be truly successful. That is why my efforts will be supported by those of my colleagues the Ministers of Tourism, of

Energy, Science and Technology, and of Northern Development and Mines. I look forward to working with them and with all of our stakeholders to meet the challenges and make the most of the opportunities that this 21st century will present to us.

TOURISM AND TRADE

Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation): Formalizing the links between tourism, culture and recreation opens up a world of possibilities to keep Ontario competitive, to encourage more partnerships between public and private industries, and to enhance economic development and job creation.

The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Recreation has taken aggressive action on multiple fronts to establish Ontario as a world-class, four-season tourism destination. Just as the government of Ontario promotes Ontario internationally as a great place to visit and do business, we also promote a strong quality of life for all Ontarians through recreation and cultural opportunities.

I am pleased to be part of a government that is ceaseless in its efforts to expand opportunities for trade across this province. That is why I am grateful for the efforts of my colleague the Minister of Consumer and Business Services and his predecessor, now the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, for their efforts in securing access to the European market for Ontario icewines. Congratulations to those two gentlemen.

These efforts were rewarded recently with a tremendous breakthrough: the lifting of trade barriers that for years have prevented Ontario producers from sharing their award-winning icewines with a key international market. I am pleased to announce today that the government will build on the achievement of access into the European market for Ontario icewines by pursuing a broadening of that access provision to include the province's other award-winning wines.

As our efforts to increase awareness of our quality wines grow, so too will our efforts to capitalize on the tourism opportunities that will result from increased awareness of all that Ontario has to offer, especially in the area of agri-tourism. That is why I am pleased to announce today that the government will investigate options for preserving tender fruit land and promoting agri-tourism.

The sustainability of tender fruit lands and agriculture is key to the development of Ontario's wine, culinary, and agri-tourism industry. As a result, my ministry, working with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and others, will be developing a plan to ensure tourism development is compatible with agricultural land preservation.

We want to duplicate Ontario's excellence in agri-tourism on the fields of international competition and community recreation. That's why I'm pleased to announce that in preparation for our bid to host the Olympics in 2008, and to better compete in international games, the government will conduct a review of amateur

sport policy, led by my parliamentary assistant, Frank Mazzilli, the MPP for London-Fanshawe.

Sport and recreation touch lives across our province, from the local arena and recreation programs through to the high-performance athlete dreaming of Olympic glory. Among other objectives, our government will examine ways in which we can encourage more private sector partners to join us in support of community recreation and athletic excellence, and develop strategies to promote sport tourism through the hosting of high-profile amateur and professional events.

Our government is also working to promote excellence and job creation in our cultural media industry, an industry that already employs 60,000 Ontarians every year. That is why the government will set clear goals for cultural industries through the Ontario Media Development Corp in order to enhance, for example, Ontario's attraction as a preferred location for film and television production. New partners in the book and magazine publishing, sound recording and digital media sectors will join film and television to prepare for the era of convergence as the lines between these industries are gradually broken down by new technology and new opportunities.

Finally, the merger of tourism, culture and recreation presents an excellent opportunity to drive our 23 ministerial agencies to maximize their contributions to Ontario's economy. That's why the government will mandate its operating agencies to promote business growth, leverage private investment and enhance job creation.

In closing, I look forward to working with my colleagues to promote growth, investment and job creation across this great province.

NORTHERN ECONOMY

Hon Dan Newman (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): I was delighted when I listened to the recent speech from the throne. In step 7 of its plan, this government clearly enunciates its goal to see economic growth in all regions of the province. At the same time, this government recognizes that some regions have not shared equally in recent growth and prosperity. We know that northern communities face unique challenges. Severe weather conditions, long distances and sparse population can make doing business in the north a challenge. This is particularly true in Ontario's far north.

The far north covers the northern 40% of the province of Ontario. It is the ancestral home of 30 First Nation communities. It represents a storehouse of untapped economic potential, with opportunities in mining, forest products, tourism and energy development. The people of this vast land must share in the prosperity that will be the legacy of this government.

But in order for this to happen, there are many challenges to overcome. First nation communities, which make up most of the 13,000 residents of the region, increasingly see the economic potential from developing far-north resources in an environmentally sound, sustainable manner. The people of the far north want the chance

to build healthy, prosperous lives for their children and grandchildren. More and more they seek fruitful partnerships with private industry and the provincial government as well as the federal government. At the same time, they are concerned that development occurs responsibly and in a manner that is sensitive to environmental, cultural and heritage values. The Ontario government understands and supports these aspirations.

That is why I am announcing today that by moving to open up the far north to mining and resource activities, the government will create more opportunities for the residents and help aboriginal communities become more self-reliant. We are working hard to create an environment in which economic activity can flourish by continuing to enhance transportation, telecommunications, health care and community development.

We have worked with remote First Nations communities to bring electrical power to their homes, meeting places and businesses and to upgrade plumbing. We have helped communities to mitigate the higher cost and challenges of distance by investing each year in a network of winter roads. We have introduced major initiatives that will open doors for new employment and economic activity by strengthening our forest products industry and creating exciting opportunities in tourism. At the same time, we have moved decisively to make Ontario one of the best places in the world for mineral sector investment.

While these are significant achievements, we note that there is still much more to do and we are committed to working with First Nations to build strong, healthy, self-reliant communities across Ontario's far north. Over the next weeks and months we will bring you further details on this initiative.

I look forward to working with the communities of Ontario's far north to make these dreams a reality.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology): In October 1997, our government established the Ministry of Energy, Science and Technology, with a mandate to make Ontario one of the leading jurisdictions in the world for research and innovation.

I report today that the ministry is well on its way to fulfilling this mandate and intends to make Ontario the best North American jurisdiction for research, development and innovation and for the jobs and prosperity they bring. In this regard, the ministry is currently looking at a series of performance indicators to better measure our success in achieving this goal.

Innovation is not new to Ontarians, as our history and past economic accomplishments have shown. Innovation is defined as our ability to use science and technology to find new solutions and generate new business opportunities. Innovation is fast becoming a do-or-die component of economic success.

The pace of economic change today means that we can no longer rest on our past accomplishments, other-

wise we will be overtaken by our global competitors. The ability to develop and commercialize new technologies, products and services and bring them to market right here in Ontario is the key to maintaining and strengthening Ontario's competitive position in the new economy.

To encourage and support science, technology and innovation, our government has taken an approach that avoids picking winners and losers. Instead, our approach has been to concentrate on creating the right climate to retain and attract business and investment, particularly in the knowledge-based or R&D-intensive new economy industries.

Last year's provincial budget yet again illustrated this government's continued commitment to building one of the most competitive jurisdictions for business, investment and job creation in North America. The corporate income tax cuts, the capital gains inclusion rate reduction, and the employer health tax exemption for eligible R&D-intensive companies—all announced in the 2000 Ontario budget—reflect the government's strong commitment to strengthening Ontario's competitive fundamentals for research and development and commercialization.

1410

We are clearly well on our way to building a high-value-added, innovation-based economy in Ontario. We all know that this is key to our future success and prosperity and to maintaining the high quality of life we have come to expect in this province. So I am proud to announce that the government will continue to foster new partnerships between business and research institutions to spur innovation through the commercialization of new ideas. The government has set the goal of making Ontario the third-largest home of the biotechnology industry in North America, and will work hard to achieve that.

In addition to the \$20 million our government has committed to creating biotechnology commercialization centres in Ottawa, London and Toronto, we have made significant investments in research through initiatives such as the \$550-million Ontario Research and Development Challenge Fund, the \$750-million Ontario Innovation Trust and the \$85-million Premier's Research Excellence Awards.

Finally, I am proud to announce that the government supports and fully endorses the Canadian effort to have Ontario host the ITER international fusion energy project. The government is confident that, in competing against Japan and France, Canada can win this bid, which is awaiting formal submission by the federal government. Ontario long ago indicated a willingness to commit \$10 million per year for 30 years, each and every year, to this important scientific initiative, and we urge the federal government to commit to financial support for the project and to submit the bid. If Canada's bid succeeds, this research and development project would bring to Ontario 250 of the brightest minds in nuclear energy science, help diversify Ontario's high-tech industry, and inject billions of dollars into the provincial economy over 30 years.

I am pleased to reaffirm our government's commitment to consolidate Ontario's position as a global leader in research, development and innovation. The resulting jobs and prosperity will help fulfill our goal to make Ontario the best jurisdiction in North America in which to live, work, invest and raise a family.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Responses?

RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): Finally some recognition to the important industry of agriculture by this government, because it's certainly obvious that agriculture is something that has not been very high on the priority list of the Mike Harris government.

This government needs to recognize first and foremost that if you want to have a thriving agricultural industry and you want to see things happen in rural Ontario, you have to get behind and support that agricultural industry. That hasn't been happening.

It's positive, though, to see the made-in-Ontario initiatives that the minister is going through, because I think the minister and the government and eastern Ontario farmers have been looking across the border to Quebec and have seen the commitment that for over 25 years the Quebec government has made to agriculture. That commitment is in excess of \$300 million a year to safety nets alone, almost the entire OMAFRA budget in this province. I certainly hope there is going to be that financial support as we look for a made-in-Ontario solution to the safety net crises facing this province, that the minister has the dollars behind him if he's very serious.

The minister talked about working on a goal, but this government and Mike Harris promised in 1995 that there would be no cuts to agriculture. What we've seen is an over 40% cut in the agricultural budget. Where agriculture once was 1.2% of the provincial spending, it's now one half of 1%. There are rumours flying that we're going to see more cuts to agriculture in this budget. That's just not comprehensible and is no commitment to agriculture in this province.

They talk about food safety. It's very good, it's very important to have food safety, to ensure that the public has confidence in the food that we eat and consume, but it's no good if there's not going to be anyone there to enforce and inspect. We've seen cuts and cuts in the inspection end within food safety.

The animal health lab at the University of Guelph plays a vital role in ensuring the quality of the livestock herds of this province, but this is a government that forced the animal health lab to go out and do private fundraising. This is a government that forced the animal health lab to go out and purchase used equipment. That's no commitment.

It's interesting too to hear the Minister of Tourism talk about the tender fruit industry and Ontario wines. I hope that the Minister of Tourism works with the Minister of Agriculture and starts lobbying—and I'm certainly

prepared to work with you—the federal government to deal with the serious plum pox sharka virus issue that's facing the farmers in the Niagara Peninsula.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): My response is to the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology to say that our future does depend on our ability to compete in terms of brainpower, and I would say that the government made a fundamental mistake in cutting support for our post-secondary education. It's now 15% lower than when Premier Harris became the Premier.

I think also that if we want to look at how we're going to compete long-term—we're now the most export-oriented jurisdiction in the world, but the government has chosen to compete on the basis of lower taxes. I gather the budget on Wednesday will commit Ontario to corporate income taxes 25% below neighbouring US states. In my opinion, the way we will win the long-term economic battle is not by attracting business to come here because we've got lower taxes—"Come here because we've got competitive taxes"—but "We are clearly the best jurisdiction where you're going to find the best possible workforce." That means an investment in science and technology in our post-secondary education, not competing on the basis of 25% lower corporate income taxes.

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): It's perhaps breaking new ground when I hear a minister congratulate the federal government for the initiatives it has taken. Of course, I happen to agree with the minister today when he talks about the federal government's initiative on their bid for the Canadian effort on the international fusion energy project and fully endorses it. It's kind of nice to see somewhat of a change of heart, that in fact they're seeing the federal government do something to their liking.

When I look at the announcement—it's not really an announcement; I guess it is a statement. It starts off saying, "I'm proud to stand in the Legislature to let the people know the government will continue to foster new partnerships between business and research institutions." I don't know where the minister was about three weeks ago, when a number of groupings of high-tech firms in Ontario asked the federal government—have been pleading—to please provide some support for making sure our universities and colleges are strong in the area of technological development. We are not producing the students who are able to be hired by our companies, and they are needed. That's why companies have to go far afield. We could produce those, so money should be going into our colleges and universities to hire the professors to train our students so they can work here in Ontario and in Canada.

RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): Today is an interesting day for certainly one reason. Over

a year ago the government commissioned its so-called task force on rural and northern development and now, a year later, they've produced a report which has nothing in it. In fact, I would be embarrassed to produce this report because it ignores many of the issues that are out there. We know this is a government that has a real problem in terms of farm runoff. If the government really wanted to address issues, it would be addressing that issue, but we know already that that is another issue this government is going to go out and study further; in other words, delay and do nothing.

Every day the Minister of Energy in this Legislature touts the California version of hydro deregulation and privatization, but one of the things the government doesn't want to acknowledge is the fact that people living in rural and northern Ontario in many cases are already seeing a degradation of their hydro service. As hydro companies ready themselves for privatization, there are fewer and fewer people out there looking after the lines, looking after the transmission and distribution system, and so more frequent brownouts and brownouts, which last longer, are actually already becoming a reality in much of rural and northern Ontario.

If those two issues had been addressed in this task force, those would have been two very important things that I think people would have been appreciative of hearing. The fact that they're not there tells us once again that this government doesn't have a strategy, and today's series of statements is simply another attempt to reannounce and reannounce something that still isn't happening.

I want to refer to the comments of the Minister of Tourism when he talks about tender fruit lands and says the government is going to study strategies to preserve tender fruit land. You're the government that did away with a strategy when you became government. There was a strategy in place. You did away with it and now the problem has become much worse. What's the government suggesting? Oh, they're now going to study the problem. You created the problem and you should be on your feet today admitting that.

1420

NORTHERN ECONOMY

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): Then we have the so-called Minister of Northern Development and Mines who gets up. Basically I have to say to him, your announcement today doesn't answer any of the questions that First Nations have put to this government. Over a year and a half ago, I read in this Legislature a letter from the Canadian president of De Beers, the diamond mining company, which gave very clear advice to your government. If you want to promote mining in First Nations territory, you must negotiate with First Nations a revenue-sharing strategy. Do we hear anything about a revenue-sharing strategy today? No. They gave you that advice a year and a half ago. De Beers wrote to the minister and the deputy minister and said, "If you want to promote mining in the First Nations territory in

the far north, you've got to be willing to talk about a revenue-sharing strategy." You're not there yet.

I outlined for the Legislature last week the fact there is a growing wood supply gap in northern Ontario. If the minister was really doing something, he would have been on his feet today explaining exactly what the strategy will be to negotiate with First Nations to access timber in the far north, what the revenue-sharing strategy will be, what the strategy will be for land use planning, for environmental protection, for training, for jobs, and what the strategy will be in terms of possible locations of sawmills etc, so that aboriginal people can take part in that economy. None of that was in today's statement, which tells us once again you don't have anything to announce. All of these issues that must be addressed, you don't have a strategy. You're simply trying to put forward another superficial announcement to cover over the fact that the real issues aren't being dealt with.

Finally, if the government really wants to address the issues across northern and rural Ontario, it has got to become much more specific in what it means in terms of a northern Ontario medical school and a rural medical school for southwestern Ontario. Simply announcing in the throne speech that you like the idea, without being able to tell people where the campuses will be, how many spaces will be available for medical students, how many will be reserved for students from the rural areas and how many will be reserved for students from northern areas doesn't put us any step further. Please, some details addressing these serious problems.

HOCKEY GAME

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: We have with us today a typical Ontarian supporting the Toronto Maple Leafs, Doreen Ullman. As you know, the Toronto Maple Leafs are the last team left in Ontario and in Canada in their search for the coveted Stanley Cup. I move unanimous consent that we all give our support to Ontario's great team as they face the Devils tonight. Go, Leafs, go.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I'm sure all members will be watching intently, and since we won't be sitting this evening, I'm sure all TV sets will be tuned in to the game.

ORAL QUESTIONS

TUITION FEES

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Minister of Colleges and Universities. Some very startling information was released today by Ipsos-Reid, and it really is a sad commentary on the state of affairs in Ontario when it comes to colleges and universities.

One of the most important dreams that sustains our working families is the thought that their children will be able to go on to college and university, assuming they've got the good marks and assuming that they're working hard. The Ipsos-Reid survey released today states that 70% of Ontario parents are concerned that their children may not be able to attend a public university, even if they're qualified, and the reason is simply because they won't be able to afford to go on to college and university.

Madam Minister, why are you, through your policies, robbing our working families of the dream to send their children to college and university?

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues): I think the greatest problem that this province has in getting the message out is that question: robbing students. The exact opposite is the fact.

We have a plan, a continued plan based on experience from every level of government, that college and university students will have a place if they're qualified and if they are willing to go on to post-secondary. Even as enrolment rises, we are working on that plan. The plan is to set aside the kind of financial support in all areas for students so that they can move on and have those hopes and dreams that the leader of the party stated.

I don't know why that kind of question would be asked, because hopes and dreams are a reality for our young people and there will be a place for every qualified and willing student in our colleges and universities.

Mr McGuinty: This is not a matter of messaging. Parents understand what they and their children are going through. They are saying you are robbing them of their dreams to send their children on to college and university. It's not an issue of messaging.

Your own report, Portals and Pathways, describes in some detail the crisis that you have created. Your report tells us that operating grants for university students have fallen by 29%. Operating grants for college students have fallen by 42%. They also go on to say, "Over the past five years the amount of loan assistance available to students has decreased by \$500 million even though tuition has increased substantially." Your own commission is telling you what we have been telling you and what our parents and children are experiencing: tuition fees have gone up, funding has gone down and there is less money available for our students when it comes to assistance.

I ask you again on behalf of working families: why are you robbing us of the dream to send our kids on to colleges and universities?

Hon Mrs Cunningham: We are preparing for 88,000 more students in our colleges and universities. Last year, with our private sector partners, we set aside \$1.8 billion, the highest amount ever in 30 years, to build for this next generation of young people. We plan to have our public sector stronger than ever.

We capped tuition at a 2% increase a year for the next five years so that parents could plan. We have added over half a billion dollars for student assistance. The universities have set aside one third of the increased tuition so

that students will have the help they need, and the list goes on.

We have a plan. There will be a place for every qualified and willing student to go on to our post-secondary system.

Mr McGuinty: Mike Harris and his government have had their hands all over our kids' colleges and universities now for six years and here are the results. After six years, you have produced a system that ranks 59th out of 60 North American states and provinces for investment in post-secondary education. After six years, you have cut altogether \$1.4 billion out of the post-secondary sector. After six years, you have still done nothing to deal with the looming faculty shortage. After six years, you have still done nothing to make room for those 88,000 children who are going to graduate all together.

You may be prepared, Madam Minister, to dismiss them out of hand, but is it any wonder that the overwhelming majority of Ontario parents feel that you are robbing them and their children of a dream that sustained them through their daily struggles? Again, why are you robbing our working families of the dream to send their kids to colleges and universities?

Hon Mrs Cunningham: When I attempted to answer this question earlier in question period today, I said that the leader of the Liberal Party does a lot to contribute to the fears of the young people who want to go on to post-secondary education.

We have never been better prepared for this next generation of young people. We are building some 57 new buildings: \$1.8 billion in capital infrastructure; \$228 million to our access to opportunities program; 23,000 new spaces for students in high-tech programs; \$103 million just last year in operating grants for the current academic year—new dollars; \$550 million in our Ontario Research and Development Challenge Fund so those young researchers will want to stay in Ontario and Canada and make our universities even more competitive than they are around the world; \$750 million—

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

1430

NORTHERN ONTARIO HERITAGE FUND

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. Minister, I have a copy of the rules for the northern Ontario heritage fund, and I'm sure that you are familiar with them. One of the rules says, "Projects proposed by an individual business are not eligible." We now understand that the Premier's friends got around that particular rule through a bogus non-profit shell corporation.

But there's another rule that you should also be aware of, Minister, and it says that the "northern Ontario heritage fund ... investment must be necessary to make the project viable."

Sam Yawney, a Sudbury businessman, has been running a professional golf tournament in northern Ontario for years, and he's done so without a nickel of government money. He's proven that professional golf tournaments are indeed viable in the north without government help.

Minister, two clear rules have been broken, and I'm just wondering whose side you're on here. Are you on the side of working families who are worried about you mispending their dollars, or are you on the side of Mike Harris and his friends, who enjoy special advantage?

Hon Dan Newman (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): I say to the Leader of the Opposition he's absolutely correct that private businesses are not eligible to receive money from the northern Ontario heritage fund, unlike when his party was the government. They funded money directly to private businesses, including for-profit ski hills. That's the legacy of the Liberal government.

But it's my understanding that the Ontario Open Heritage Classic included both pros and amateurs, whereas Mr Yawney's tournament is a by-invitation-only golf tournament. His event did not receive the same level of international and national attention.

It is my understanding that Mr Yawney did not submit an application for his tournament to the northern Ontario heritage fund, but should he or anyone else from northern Ontario wish to bring forward an application to the northern Ontario heritage fund, they would of course look at that application.

Mr McGuinty: It's very interesting watching the minister try to distinguish between a golf tournament that was held in North Bay and another one that was held near Sudbury.

Here are the facts, Mr Minister: we're talking about two separate golf tournaments. Both were held in the north last summer. Each offered the same prize money. Even the players were basically the same: there were 110 players who were the same in each of those two tournaments. The only difference is that in one case the tournament was run by the Premier's friends; in the other case, in the case of the gentleman from Sudbury, he was told that he need not even bother to apply.

So I'm asking you again, Minister, whose side are you on? Are you on the side of working families who are very concerned about the fact that you are mispending their taxpayer dollars on the Premier's friends, or are you on the side of working families?

Hon Mr Newman: In fact, again, my understanding is that Mr Yawney did not make an application to the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp. So nothing could be rejected, because there was no application brought forward.

It's important that there be international and national attention brought to the golf tournament. His tournament was a by-invitation-only golf tournament. In fact, it's important to note that the tournament that the member opposite is talking about was also held in Sault Ste Marie

in 1999 and he didn't seem to have a problem with that tournament then.

Mr McGuinty: All right, you're not prepared to pass judgment on a clear contravention of the rules in the past. Minister, you've made that perfectly clear. Here's something else I want to draw to your attention.

In a speech that Mike Harris made to the board of trade a short while back, he said, "You've told me that what you want is the infrastructure to support all businesses and all economic activity in the region, not grants that favour one business while excluding its competitors." In this case Mike Harris's friends got hundreds of thousands of dollars to operate in direct competition to an honest, hard-working Sudbury businessman. You should know, Minister, that that is wrong.

Again this year these same friends of the Premier are looking for more money. They're asking you to break the rules again. To be specific, they're looking for \$150,000 more.

Minister, it was wrong then; it is wrong now. Whose side are you on: that of Mike Harris and his friends, or Ontario's working families?

Hon Mr Newman: The difference between our government and the member opposite's party when they were in government is that we don't fund for-profit companies as his party did when they were in office. They funded in 1989 some \$2.2 million for a for-profit private ski hill.

But the issue the member opposite speaks about, with respect to the application: it underwent the proper due diligence process. I have a letter from my deputy minister, Cam Clark, indicating that the application met the heritage fund's and the tourism program's eligibility criteria and guidelines and, furthermore, that the projects met the key objectives of attracting tourists to northern Ontario and to marketing northern Ontario through national and international television and newspaper coverage.

WATER QUALITY

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of the Environment. Cryptosporidium has killed people in North Battleford. Meanwhile the city of North Bay, which has had cryptosporidium in its water, does without a water filtration plant to protect people from cryptosporidium. At the same time, your government has done away with the provincial water protection fund, the only fund available exclusively to protect drinking water. Chlorine treatment won't kill cryptosporidium. You require a specialized filtration plant, which costs \$20 million.

Minister, are you going to restore the water protection fund in the budget this week or are you going to wait until someone else dies?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of the Environment): As the leader of the third party is probably aware, we have replaced that fund with the SuperBuild fund, which is providing money for water and sewers. That is

through OSTAR, and that is a \$240-million commitment thus far that has been made.

Mr Hampton: Minister, you would know that the SuperBuild fund is being used for all and sundry—in fact, not much of it is going to protect drinking water—and you know there's not enough money in OSTAR, and municipalities are telling you that.

I want to ask you about the Premier's comment on April 30 on CFRB radio, where he said, "We don't have enough money in the treasury to protect the environment." Minister, please explain to the people of North Bay and Walkerton and other communities that are boiling their water how it is that your government has money for tax cuts for the well-off but no money to protect the drinking water of our citizens.

Hon Mrs Witmer: It's clear that the leader of the third party is not aware of the new drinking water regulation that came into effect in August 2000. That regulation applied to large waterworks, it applied to public and private waterworks, and it set some very tough standards. In fact, the standards that have currently been set are the toughest of any jurisdiction in Canada.

Again I indicate to you that the \$240 million that has thus far been put into the OSTAR program is dedicated to be used to ensure that municipalities can move forward.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Final supplementary.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): Indeed we are aware of the regulations that you brought in, Minister, and experts and environmentalists say that they are at best short-term solutions and Band-Aid solutions, that what we need is safe drinking water legislation. They've made it very clear that your regulations won't work. You're the one who isn't listening to what needs to be done out there.

I've reintroduced the NDP Safe Drinking Water Act, now called Bill 3. In the past you haven't supported it and you brought in regulations that don't go far enough. What we're saying today, Minister, is that you can do one of two things: you can have more tax cuts for the wealthy or you can restore the provincial water protection fund, bring in the Safe Drinking Water Act and rebuild the Ministry of the Environment to protect our drinking water, to protect our air and our health. Which is it, Minister, safe drinking water that doesn't kill people or more tax cuts for the wealthy?

1440

Hon Mrs Witmer: The member should know that we have indicated that we are very concerned and we have moved forward in a way to ensure that there will be safe drinking water.

In fact, I've had an opportunity to take a look at the legislation you've introduced and I just want to comment that the bill you've introduced does mirror some of what we have in the drinking water protection regulation regarding regular and frequent sampling and testing, public access to records of large waterworks, clear notification and use of accredited labs. We have all that.

However, your bill does not have what we have, and that is stringent treatment requirements for all drinking water, submission of comprehensive engineering reports for all waterworks, a review of certificate approvals every three years and, finally, you don't require posting requirements for unsafe drinking water.

COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, your friend Ralph Klein has had to pay out \$4.1 billion of taxpayers' money in energy rebates because of the rapidly rising cost of deregulated power in Alberta. In California, the state has now had to pay out \$7.5 billion in order to access power because deregulation has failed there.

My question is, how much money is the finance minister of Ontario going to put aside in this year's budget to pay for your scheme of deregulation and privatization of our electricity system?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology): There's no need to put any money aside at this point.

Mr Hampton: This is the Minister of Energy who two years ago said, "California, here we come. California is the place to copy." Now we see that electricity prices in California have doubled, and doubled again, and they're having to spend \$7.5 billion of taxpayers' money to cover up the failed deregulation.

Minister, a few weeks ago you would have met with representatives of Abitibi-Consolidated, the largest consumer of electricity in Ontario for their five mills. They would have told you that just the 8% increase you announced earlier this year is going to add at least \$15 million to their power bill and they would have told you that it creates major problems for them.

Don't you think it might be a wise idea to set aside some money to help restructure and move some of our basic industries, which won't be able to afford to pay these much higher electricity bills?

Hon Mr Wilson: Again, Ontario is not a California or Alberta. The problem of increased prices in those jurisdictions is that they hadn't built any new power plants in a number of years and they simply are short of power. Therefore, in a supply-and-demand situation, you would expect prices to go up. In fact, it's a recipe for bankruptcy, and no government in their right mind would go down that road, which is why the honourable member is completely off base.

With respect to Abitibi, let me read to you a paragraph from the letter they sent me a day after our meeting. "Ontario business cannot withstand the inefficiencies of a market that is not truly competitive." They're referring to today's electricity system. "Abitibi-Consolidated has been diligent in preparing for deregulation and will be ready to fully participate," when it comes. In fact, they encouraged me to open the market as soon as possible to competition.

EDUCATION LEGISLATION

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):

My question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, over one-half million students lost an entire year of clubs and teams as a result of your stubbornness and your refusal to act in a way that would clearly put our students first.

Today in the gallery is Peter Ramsay, who is student premier for the Ontario Secondary School Students' Association. He put out a release today and I want to quote from that release. It says, "Ontario students have suffered immeasurably this year. We have lost valuable teaching time, extracurricular opportunities, post-secondary scholarships and morale as a result of changes introduced to the education system. We demand an apology for the suffering that this government has put Ontario students through this year."

Madam Minister, on behalf of the over 500,000 students who have been affected by your stubbornness and your refusal to put them first, will you now offer them an apology?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader): Today the government introduced a significant package of initiatives which represents what I think is an excellent compromise, asking every education partner to contribute, to make a change so that we can have for our children this coming school year—we are giving the school boards more flexibility and the teachers more flexibility and more resources so that we will have more teachers able to do remediation, which is something we know some students need, and also more extracurricular, because that is also a service our students very much need.

The only persons who need to apologize in this particular instance are those individuals who looked the students in the eye and said, "No, I'm not going to do this because I have a political fight with the government," or "I have a labour fight with the school board." That's the only apology those students need.

It's not fair to those students to have been caught in the disputes that they were caught in. The government put forward a task force which made significant recommendations. We have accepted those recommendations—

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

Mr McGuinty: We thought the minister had somehow transformed into a kinder, gentler minister who's prepared to put before her a peace offering and to work with teachers, but the old Janet is back. Let that be very clear. She's here to start fighting once again.

One of the downsides of your solution is the fact that class sizes will now be larger at the high school level. We think that is not a good development. We think it means less individual attention for our students. I am asking you now to reconsider that particular aspect of your solution. I am asking you to ensure that you redraft it in such a way that it does not translate into larger class sizes for our students. We think that if you really want to do the

right thing, you'll put students first throughout, and that means you won't increase their class sizes. Will you do that?

Hon Mrs Ecker: For weeks, all we heard from the Leader of the Opposition was, "What have you done with the task force report? What a great report. Why doesn't the government adopt it?" Well, we have adopted the report, and now the Leader of the Opposition says, "Oh, no, no, that's not what we should be doing."

We know very clearly where the Leader of the Opposition was coming from. His so-called solution to this was to take high school students, whose workload had already increased—

Interjection.

Hon Mrs Ecker: If the member from Windsor would be quiet, I could finish the point here.

The Leader of the Opposition wants to take the workload of high school students, who have already been asked to do more with the new curriculum—

The Speaker: Minister, take a seat. The member for Windsor West, come to order, please.

Sorry for the interruption, Minister.

Hon Mrs Ecker: What the Leader of the Opposition wants to do is to take our high school students, who are already working harder on the new curriculum, and say, "Let's increase their workload so we can decrease the teachers' workload." That is not the solution.

They said, "Accept the task force report." We have accepted the task force report. We've done what our education partners asked for. This is a good—

The Speaker: The minister's time is up.

CONDOMINIUM LEGISLATION

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North): My question is directed to the Minister of Consumer and Business Services. It relates to—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Time is continuing on. It is quiet. There is not going to be total silence. The time is going. If you want to ask a question, ask the question.

Mr Hastings: It will be an attempt. It's hard when you can't make your words clear. They don't understand.

My question relates to the Condominium Act. Thousands of condominium owners in north Etobicoke and across Ontario will be glad to hear about the new guidelines and regulations that are to be issued by your ministry today. What we would like to know is, what is the scope and design of these particular regulations and how will they enhance quality housing for condominium owners?

1450

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Business Services): Indeed this is an important question for over 288,000 residential units which are condominiums in this province. Who would have thought back in 1967 that we would have had that number of people choosing that style of life?

The Condominium Act and the regulations which are appended to it and come into force today offer condominium owners, both present and perhaps people who would like to purchase one, added protection in terms of the amount of disclosure that's required by the condominium corporation to the residential owner and to prospective purchasers.

There are new voting rules which are much more in tune with the realities of condominium corporations and the ownership there. For instance, if in fact a condominium is occupied by mostly tenants, the owners of that building, if they're in a minority, are guaranteed a seat on the board. There are many, many more protections—

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

Mr Hastings: Minister, my supplementary relates to the specific benefits of consumer protection arising out of these announced condominium regulation changes.

What I would like to know is, how will these specific guidelines and regulations help working-family condominium owners, condominium boards and, above all, jobs in Ontario—

Interjections.

Hon Mr Sterling: Mr Speaker, I couldn't hear over the cheers for the member from Etobicoke North exactly the question, but I do know that in his own riding he has many condominium units and has long been an advocate of strengthening the power of the people who reside in them.

This Condominium Act also provides more flexibility toward the creation, the staging of the condominiums, and is indeed a tremendous, tremendous improvement from 1967 and when it was last approved in 1979, and now it's in effect again.

We have produced a pamphlet outlining the rules and the regulations for all buyers and owners, and they have been sent to each of the 288,000 owners across this province so that they know their rights and they will know how good this act is.

I would like to thank each and every member of this Legislature, and even some opposition members, for their support for their support for this particular act, and lastly, I would like to thank the Deputy Premier for his work on it—

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

COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): My question is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, Ontario Power Generation Inc, the successor company, which is still owned by the people of Ontario, and which holds all of the generating assets of the old Ontario Hydro, reported earlier today its first quarter financial results for the quarter ending March 31, 2001.

Sad to say that operating income is down and down sharply. Net income is down and down sharply. Earnings per common share are down and down significantly. Revenues, interestingly, are up, we are told in part

because there has been less competition for Ontario Power Generation in this past quarter.

Anybody reading this report would have to conclude a couple of things: firstly, this report is going to mean more bad news for the people of Ontario because undoubtedly this is going to increase the indebtedness that the people of Ontario have guaranteed. Secondly, and this is my question, what do you and your officials believe will be the impact on electricity rates once the market opens in May 2002, as both you and the Premier have indicated?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology): We don't see that in the report at all. I don't know who's doing your analysis these days. They've had a banner year at OPG and in fact they've been able to provide us with \$1 billion to put toward the legacy of debt that your government and previous governments left, and that's terrific news. It's one of the largest debt payments we've ever made in the history of this province, and it all comes as a result of the strong turnaround management that we put in place some six years ago.

Mr Conway: It's the same old story. Just months ago we had the Provincial Auditor and we had Energy Probe saying that not a great deal is changing. The indebtedness that is going to be the responsibility of the people of Ontario under your scheme last year went up. This report would suggest that it's going up again. Costs are up. The rehabilitation of Pickering is higher than expected. The pension costs are higher than expected. Other costs are higher than expected. Revenues are improved because there's less competition, we are told, than was expected.

You are—we are, in a sense—in a complete conflict of interest. Would you agree to this so that the people of Ontario might get some second opinion, some oversight of this incredibly and extraordinarily important policy? Are you, on behalf of your government, prepared today to agree with me that we should establish, and soon, a select committee of this Legislature with specific oversight responsibility for this so-called new electricity policy so that the people and the taxpayers and ratepayers of Ontario won't be finding out all the bad news three and five years from now when you're gone, the rates are up and Ron Osborne is out cashing in very lucrative stock options?

Hon Mr Wilson: Pickering is not over budget. The pension fund is not costing us more money than anticipated. OPG, with its very strong year—I'm going to correct myself—was able to provide to put toward the debt this year property taxes and dividends and corporate income taxes that totalled over \$1 billion. These revenues are dedicated to retiring the legacy of debt and liabilities of Ontario Hydro.

Even after these payments, Ontario Power Generation's cash position is strengthened in shareholders' equity. We've increased our equity by \$400 million this year. So the company is not only producing more money to pay toward the debt; it's in a stronger financial position and better with respect to the books and the shareholders' position.

Finally, we're very proud of this company. Whoever told you its position is weakened because of less competition must know nothing about the 93-year electricity system we've had in this province. It owns 90% of the generation. It never has had any significant competition. So you've given such a complete—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): New question.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): My question is for the Minister of Education. As we welcome Education Week in Ontario, parents and students across the province are interested in knowing that the government is taking the right steps to ensure that students receive the best possible education.

Today in Pickering the minister made some significant announcements. Will the minister inform the House as to how these will benefit students in Waterloo-Wellington and across the province?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader): I think this week was an appropriate time to announce the package that we did, being Education Week, which gives us an opportunity to celebrate, to congratulate and to thank all of the members of our public education system for the hard work and the excellence that they produce on a daily basis.

What we announced this week were additional resources on top of the money that we announced last month. So we're looking at \$360 million more, new dollars, for our education system. That's going out flexibly to school boards so they can address local priorities. But we've also made some significant changes to make sure that our schools and our teachers have the resources and the flexibility that they need to provide more remediation for those students who might require help with the new curriculum and also to ensure that extracurricular, co-instructional activities, which are very important to our students, can also be provided for our students in all schools.

Mr Arnott: I want to thank the minister for that excellent answer, and I'm pleased to hear that the government is putting students first.

The additional funding that the minister has announced today is welcome news for Ontario parents and students alike. I want to say that initiatives like she talked about today include some welcome news on co-instructional activities, or, as we used to call them, extracurricular activities.

Parents and students in my riding would like to know, how does your announcement advance this issue?

Hon Mrs Ecker: We've made a couple of changes, as I said. We've put in place more resources that school boards and schools can use flexibly. We have also changed the rules around the definition of the instructional time standard so that things like extra remediation time and on-call for teachers who might be doing extracurricular activities can be part of what's recognized and funded for our schools. This is a package that not only

the task force but also our education partners asked us to put in place. They said this would work.

We are proclaiming one piece of Bill 74, the legislation that says school boards should put in place plans for extracurricular activities in their high schools. We're also going to be withdrawing the section of Bill 74 that could have made it mandatory for a teacher in elementary or secondary to do extracurriculars. So we have withdrawn that. I think that's an exceptionally good sign for the teachers.

This is what our education partners said would work and we've been very pleased to put this in place.

1500

TUITION FEES

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Madam, under your tutelage, tuition fees have gone up 60%. Under the same tutelage, deregulated programs such as medicine and law have gone up over 500%—I think it's 521%. Cuts in funding, cumulatively, have been in the range of two billion bucks. This is well documented stuff. Loans to students, at least to those who qualify for loans, have not kept up with the kinds of increases they have had to suffer under your government with the tuition fee increases in the last five years. A Stats Canada study revealed that students from lower-income families are choosing not to go to university.

I say to you, as you argue that you have the facts, these are the real facts. Ipsos-Reid says that four out of five parents say that even if their kids are qualified, they won't make it to university. These people are calling for a \$500-million investment in universities. Are you going to listen to them?

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues): Of course we're listening to parents and students. There are public meetings across this province in our colleges and universities and in our secondary schools. They're telling us they want a place for every willing and qualified student and we're telling them we have a plan that will make that happen.

We started with the capital dollars, \$1.9 billion, with private sector partners, to create new buildings, the largest increase in capital spending in over 30 years. That is the right thing to do and that was the right place to start.

The second issue we dealt with was student assistance. The questioner is not quite right, because in fact we have increased and we have built in more assistance for our students. So students who are concerned should be applying, working hard, and the student assistance will be there for them.

Mr Marchese: Minister, that's why I gave you the statistical information, because what you say doesn't jibe with what is well documented. Tuition fees have gone up, and in the deregulated programs they have gone up 500%. In terms of your funding, cumulatively it's \$2 billion less than before. Your capital expenditures are half

of what we used to spend and they certainly will be insufficient to deal with the 90,000 students who are going to come into the system in the next couple of years. You're simply not listening to people's concerns.

A majority of Ontario parents are willing to give up their tax cut, so afraid are they that their kids are not going to make it to university. In my view, you can't betray four out of five Ontario parents who are worried about not being able to afford it. This is not a luxury we are talking about; these people say it's a necessity. What they're asking you is to give back the \$500 million you have taken out, and give it back in a hurry, in order to address the needs that are there.

We need university professors, we need to accommodate the 90,000 students who are coming aboard, and your plan is not working. It's not there. I'm asking you to fight for the money we need in the next budget that's coming on Wednesday. Will you do that?

Hon Mrs Cunningham: This comes from a member whose party increased tuition 10% every year that they were in government.

We have indeed capped our fee increases to a maximum of 2% a year for five years. This is in order that parents can plan. We have the highest rate of participation of post-secondary-education students in Ontario's history, and that will go up. Some 36% of our 18- to 24-year-olds attend our post-secondary institutions.

We are doing two things that previous governments have never done. We are first of all providing the most financial assistance ever offered to students in Ontario. Not only have we said that our OSAP is there for students who need it, but we have in fact increased that amount. We have enhanced the Ontario graduate scholarship program so that more students will benefit. We have increased the Ontario student opportunity trust fund, which has raised \$600 million so that—

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

WATER QUALITY

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a question for the Minister of the Environment I want to come back to the very serious situation we raised in the House several months ago—it was raised again today—of cryptosporidium in drinking water in Ontario.

You will recall that I think it was Collingwood, Ontario, and Thunder Bay, Ontario, both had episodes of cryptosporidium, and you will remember that there are at least 30 municipalities in Ontario that do not have proper water filtration systems. Cryptosporidium is very serious. In Milwaukee it killed over 100 people in one episode. I think there were 4,000 people hospitalized, about 400,000 people who were sick.

North Bay and these other municipalities are very vulnerable to cryptosporidium because they do not have a water filtration system. The real issue, it seems to me, is the timing of that. You have required it by the end of 2002. Will you undertake today in this House to assure

the House that you will provide a special fund immediately to those municipalities so that they can immediately put in place a water filtration system that will protect them from cryptosporidium?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of the Environment): I certainly share the concerns of the member regarding cryptosporidium in the water. We've seen what has happened, not only in Milwaukee but also more recently in North Battleford. We express our sympathy and our concern to the people in Saskatchewan.

In our own province, as you know, we do have the toughest water regulations presently. In order to reduce the risk of cryptosporidium, we do ensure that all drinking supplies are filtered and chemically treated. Yes, we have met with North Bay, and obviously we need to work collaboratively with these communities throughout Ontario to ensure that we continue to have the safest drinking water possible.

Mr Bradley: The minister probably recognizes—I'm not convinced her colleagues do—there's a greater urgency to this matter that she and I would know about than perhaps many of her colleagues in the House. This is why I think there's a need for an accelerated funding regime for these municipalities. You have Sudbury—it seems to me it's the David Street pumping station—that does not have a filtration system yet. As I say, there are 30 municipalities. All are vulnerable to attack from cryptosporidium. You've had a boil-water in the Premier's own riding, just as the House came back finally after four months in April, and they had the same boil-water last year.

Minister, it seems to me that the real issue, again, is getting that money to the municipalities immediately so that they can start work on these projects for water filtration immediately. I'm asking the minister if she will undertake at the next cabinet meeting to secure from the person beside her, the provincial Treasurer, the necessary special funding for this particular program. I will support her in this. I know she'll meet some sharp elbows in dealing with the tightwads who are in the cabinet, those who have money for golf tournaments and huge corporate tax cuts. Rather than huge corporate tax cuts and golf tournaments, would you convert that money into funding for municipalities to meet the cryptosporidium crisis?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I share the concerns of the member opposite. As he also knows, there is presently no Canadian national guideline for cryptosporidium. There's no test that can confidently detect it either. That's why it is important that there are filtration and chemical treatments, and of course they are mandatory under our regulation.

So we do have in place, as I've indicated before in the House this afternoon, a \$240-million OSTAR program, which is intended to ensure that all of our municipalities have in place a system that is going to provide them with the safe water that we have indicated is going to be absolutely necessary.

1510

TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Minister, largely as a result of the Harris government policies, the last five years have seen tremendous economic growth in the Niagara region, as well as other parts of Ontario. Because of the impact this growth is having on Niagara's transportation infrastructure, this government took the proactive step of initiating a transportation needs assessment study in conjunction with the region of Niagara. Can you explain the depth of the study, what modes of transportation are being studied and when we can expect the results of this study?

Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Transportation): This needs study came about as a result of tourism pressures, trade pressures and residential development growth in the Niagara region, which has experienced tremendous growth overall. There's also the concern the government has about the tender fruit lands along the Niagara Escarpment. This particular study is the most comprehensive study ever conducted in the province of Ontario. It's covering more topics and more territory than ever before. It covers all transportation options being considered, including highway, public transit, rail, even cross-lake ferry.

Hamilton, Haldimand, Niagara, Halton—all of these municipalities have given tremendous accolades to the government for doing this study, and the study should be finished around the middle of June.

Mr Maves: Minister, I'd like to point out to you, though, that some of my constituents have contacted me with concerns about the proposal for a mid-peninsula corridor. With many of our businesses located along the Queen Elizabeth Way, some of my local businessmen are concerned about traffic being diverted to an alternate route and the potential loss of business. As well, some are concerned that existing businesses may relocate to cheap land on the new highway. Finally, with the route bypassing Niagara Falls, shouldn't the region be concerned about a potential loss of tourism dollars?

Hon Mr Clark: I can understand why some of the businesses in the member's community might have concerns, but the reality is that tourism is up and growing in Niagara; trade is up and growing in the Niagara region; residential growth is growing in the Niagara region; not to mention that agriculture is growing. At the end of the day, there's a huge growth and development in the economy of the Niagara region and we have to recognize the impact that is having on the QEW.

As a result of this needs study, the next step we'll move to is an environmental assessment process, which is a true consultation. All of the public will have an opportunity to consult, the businesses will have an opportunity to consult and we'll have a better understanding of the impacts of this corridor, both positively and potentially negatively, on this businesses in the community.

They will all have an opportunity to come forth and be heard, and we'll help them as best we can.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I believe she's here. Here is the minister now. You may continue.

Mr Gerretsen: Minister, as you know, the double-cohort issue has many parents and students who are currently in grades 10 and 11 extremely worried, anxious and upset about their prospects for a post-secondary education. By the year 2003, an additional 90,000 students will be applying for positions. You've provided some funding for additional accommodation, but there's absolutely no plan in place and there's no additional funding for operating money, which is severely needed by the universities and colleges for teaching staff and other resources.

I have a very specific question of you that the parents and the students in grades 10 and 11 want to know. The question is simply this: what guarantees and assurances can you give to those students who will qualify for admission to colleges and universities on the basis of the same secondary school exiting requirements, including the current range of marks used for admission by faculty that are now in place? Can you give those additional 90,000 students who will be coming on to the scene for colleges and universities that assurance, that they will be judged along the same lines as students currently are—or will, in effect, the entrance be upgraded?

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues): In response to the excellent question from the member for Kingston and the Islands, this is a very serious question that is being asked. To respond, I'd like to advise the member that the Council of Ontario Universities working group that works with the ministry and with myself has been dealing with this particular issue for quite a long period of time, and we ourselves in our ministry, and I as the minister, have been assured that the range of marks—I think I'm using your words correctly in this regard—and the work of the working group, that these are the same standards that we have now that will carry on into the future.

I invite the member to work with me with regard to a report that we have received. I would be very happy to share it with him.

Mr Gerretsen: We are less than two years away from 90,000 additional students coming into the system. In your own letter to a constituent of mine on February 15 of this year, you indicated that the universities expect an enrolment growth of only 23.6%, and the same thing can be said with respect to the colleges, who expect the double-cohort issue to be with them for five years. Ninety thousand students will not be getting the same kind of educational opportunities as other students are

right now. This is an entire lost generation that has come about because of your inactivity and your lack of planning.

What are you going to do today to give assurances to those parents and students who are now in grade 10 and 11 that they will have the same opportunities as their brothers and sisters will have?

Hon Mrs Cunningham: I will stand by the numbers in the letter I sent out. The 23.6%, or in that range, is a huge number of students. It's about 88,000 more students. This is not our number. This is the number that comes up through the system with data which has been collected through the colleges and universities over time. That's the best projection that they can give to us: 88,000 more students. We did in fact put out \$1.8 billion, because buildings take three or four years to build, so now we have \$1.8 billion in new buildings, which is where we started.

The member has asked about the standards. We are proud of our standards in Ontario. We want them to be better, if we can make them better. It is, in fact, the universities and colleges themselves that are monitoring all of the implications of the question, and I can assure the member that if he wants to see the work, he's most welcome.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS WEEK

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): My question is directed to the Solicitor General. Minister, the province of Ontario is not immune to major emergencies. We were reminded of this just a few years ago by the ice storm that devastated eastern Ontario. In my own riding of Northumberland, annually they celebrate the Float Your Fanny Down the Ganny, which was a major flood in Port Hope. Also, in November 1994, there was a major VIA train accident in the town of Brighton. Minister, what are you and your ministry doing and going to do to ensure that communities in Ontario are indeed prepared for emergencies?

Hon David Turnbull (Solicitor General): I thank the member for Northumberland. Ontario is prepared for threats against public safety. Emergency Measures Ontario is responsible for co-ordinating provincial emergency management and administering the Emergency Plans Act on behalf of the Solicitor General.

Ontario maintains plans for dealing with nuclear emergencies, all hazard emergencies and acts of terrorism. The Provincial Emergency Information Plan ensures that emergency response information is delivered to the public. The ministry's safe communities program provides assistance and advice to communities to supplement their emergency management plans. This government is committed to ensuring the safety of all citizens of Ontario.

1520

Mr Galt: As we heard earlier, this week is Emergency Preparedness Week. Communities all over the province and indeed the country will be participating. The

community of Port Hope in my riding has shown commitment in this area and has reached the "essential" level under the partnerships towards safer communities program, for which they will be awarded a certificate of achievement tomorrow evening. On Saturday, May 12, there will be the annual Emergency Services Day in the village of Warkworth, which is indeed a very informative day for those citizens.

Will you please tell the House and the people of Northumberland about Emergency Preparedness Week?

Hon Mr Turnbull: Emergency Preparedness Week takes place each year in May. This year's theme is "Reducing the risk: toward safer communities in the 21st century."

In Ontario, more than 75 communities have proclaimed this week to be Emergency Preparedness Week. Local fire, police and ambulance services have partnered with local schools, hospitals and the media, as well as businesses and community groups. They are all working together to promote the importance of emergency preparedness.

Emergency Measures Ontario will present certificates of achievement to the cities of Thunder Bay, Hamilton, London, Port Hope, Barrie and Cornwall for their outstanding efforts in emergency management.

This government supports Emergency Preparedness Week, and will continue to work with all levels of government and communities to promote a safer Ontario.

POLICE COMPLAINTS

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): My question is to the Attorney General. Last week on the television we saw a disturbing videotape of an Ottawa police officer bashing a woman's head into the hood of a car. Ottawa police are investigating the incident. It is now being reported that other women are coming forward with similar stories. Increasingly, we've seen women strip searched after being charged with the most minor of offences.

Minister, won't you help us get to the root of these violent and unwarranted police practices? Why don't you order an independent investigation of the Ottawa incident and show that your government stands behind its zero-tolerance policy against violence and bullying?

Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): As the member opposite is likely aware, there is a procedure when there are concerns of the sort that he has referenced, a procedure that involves a comprehensive investigation taking place, and that is underway. In the circumstances, I am not in a position to comment further upon it at this time.

Mr Kormos: Well, Attorney General, here's a direct quote. Last week you said, "All Ontarians have a right to personal safety and security. Each person should be able to walk along streets without fear...."

"Over the past five and a half years, the Mike Harris government has taken great strides"—that's what you

told us—"to ensure that Ontarians can not only be safe but feel safe," as they go about their lives.

Attorney General, there is a woman in Ottawa who doesn't feel safe, and didn't feel safe, and for good reason. This is all a crock unless you order an independent investigation into this videotaped example of police brutality. You have failed miserably on so many fronts to guarantee the safety of citizens, why not partially redeem yourself by calling an independent inquiry that's within your jurisdiction—you've got the power to do it—and tell us who you will assign to carry out this task?

Hon Mr Young: I thank the member for the question, but I'm not quite sure what it is he desires. I thought he believed in the system that we now have in place. I thought he believed in a system that allowed for an immediate and comprehensive investigation to take place by an independent body. I thought he supported that. Apparently I was wrong, but I thought he was against the idea of a politician running roughshod over a system that has been acknowledged and accepted by every stakeholder in this community.

I believe in the system we have, I believe in its independence, and I look forward to allowing it to have the time it needs in order to resolve the issues he has raised in this Legislature.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Before we begin petitions, I would ask all members to join in welcoming our group of Legislative pages serving in the second session of the 37th Parliament.

We have Marko Balan from Parkdale-High Park; Phil Birnbaum from Oak Ridges; Christopher Black from Prince Edward-Hastings; Katie Cook from Niagara Falls; Lisa-Marie Coulter from Vaughan-King-Aurora; Rhianon Cowley-Owen from Glengarry-Prescott-Russell; Sean King from Parry Sound-Muskoka; Kayla Kwinter from Eglinton-Lawrence; Ben Lindner from Perth-Middlesex; Alexander Massaad from York North; Donna Nguyen from Davenport; Mark Niglas from Windsor West; Tyler Nixon from Cambridge; Joanne Paul from Leeds-Grenville; Stephen Prankie from Etobicoke-Lakeshore; Tyler Putzer from London-Fanshawe; Thomas Robertson from Beaches-East York; Claire Schiller from Burlington; Vernissia Tam from Markham; Danielle Vanhie from Elgin-Middlesex-London; and Sabrina Wirz from Kitchener Centre.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: There's a rumour circulating about the use of this House that you may be able to help me with. I notice that there's a lot of room up in the press gallery all the time, a lot of space up there. Is it true that you are planning to extend the public galleries into the press gallery because of lack of use of the press gallery? Is that true or not?

The Speaker: Rumours are running rampant; that's not one of them.

PETITIONS

NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): This petition is to the Ontario Legislature. It's northerners demanding that the Mike Harris government eliminate health care apartheid.

"Whereas the northern health travel grant offers a reimbursement of partial travel costs at a rate of 30.4 cents per kilometre one way for northerners forced to travel for cancer care while travel policy for southerners who travel for cancer care features full reimbursement costs for travel, meals and accommodation," which is unfair;

"Whereas a cancer tumour knows no health travel policy or geographic location," which is a fact;

"Whereas a recently released Oracle research poll confirms that 92% of Ontarians support equal health travel funding;

"Whereas northern Ontario residents pay the same amount of taxes and are entitled to the same access to health care and all government services and inherent civil rights as residents living elsewhere in the province; and

"Whereas we support the efforts of the newly formed OSECC (Ontarians Seeking Equal Cancer Care), founded by Gerry Loughheed Jr, former chair of Cancer Care Ontario, Northeast Region, to correct this injustice against northerners travelling for cancer treatment;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to demand the Mike Harris government move immediately to fund full travel expenses for northern Ontario cancer patients and eliminate the health care apartheid which presently exists in the province of Ontario."

I affix my signature as I'm in agreement with it.

CHILD CARE

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly which reads as follows:

"Whereas the Conservative government under Mike Harris has cut funding for regulated child care spaces in Ontario by 15% between 1995 and 1998;

"Whereas the Conservative government under Mike Harris has yet to implement the recommendations of its own commission's Early Years report by Dr Fraser Mustard to create a seamless, integrated early years education system;

"Whereas the Conservative government will receive \$844 million over the next five years from the federal government for early years development projects;

"Whereas the Conservative government lags behind other provinces in announcing its plans for the \$844 million; and

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

“Whereas the need for affordable, accessible, regulated child care and family resource centres continues to grow in Ontario:

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

“We demand the Harris government immediately match and earmark a significant portion of the \$844 million from the federal government for expanded regulated child care spaces and family resource centres.”

This petition was put together by about 257 people, done by a child care centre in Ottawa, Strath-MacLean, and I'd like to thank the staff and the families for their support.

HORSE RIDING SAFETY

Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas an increasing number of Ontarians are turning to horseback riding as a recreational activity; and

“Whereas many of these inexperienced riders are children; and

“Whereas currently there are no minimum safety standards regulating riding establishments; and

“Whereas coroners' inquests into horse riding fatalities from as long ago as 1977 have called for the mandatory use of riding helmets and boots; and

“Whereas an unacceptable number of preventable injuries and fatalities have occurred while horseback riding;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows: to pass into law the private member's bill introduced by Tina Molinari, MPP for Thornhill, entitled the Horse Riding Safety Act, 2001, in order to increase the safety of horse riders under the age of 18 by requiring the operators of riding establishments to ensure that proper safety equipment is used, and to amend the Highway Traffic Act and make it an offence for any rider under the age of 18 to ride a horse on a highway without the proper safety equipment.”

I affix my name to this petition.

1530

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas it has been determined that recent funding allocations to the developmental services sector in the communities of Sarnia-Lambton, Chatham-Kent, and Windsor-Essex have been determined to be grossly inadequate to meet critical and urgent needs;

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

“That the Ministry of Community and Social Services immediately review the funding allocations to the communities of Sarnia-Lambton, Chatham-Kent and

Windsor-Essex, and provide funding in keeping with the requests made by families and/or their agents.”

I affix my signature to this petition.

BRAIN TUMOURS

Mr Bob Wood (London West): A petition signed by 14 people.

“Whereas early detection and treatment of brain tumours are vital to survive from this devastating disease;

“Whereas brain tumours strike people of all ages, from newborns to seniors, crossing all economic, social and ethnic boundaries and all walks of life;

“Whereas brain tumours are the most common cause of solid cancer in children; and

“Whereas brain tumour research, patient and family support services and awareness among the general public are essential to promote early detection and treatment of brain tumours.

“We, the undersigned, therefore respectfully petition the Parliament of Ontario to pass a law proclaiming the month of October in each year as Brain Tumour Awareness Month.”

HEALTH CARE

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas we believe that universally accessible, publicly funded health care is sacred and must be protected;

“Whereas Mike Harris intends on turning his back on working families and transforming our system into an American-style, two-tier system where only the rich will get quality care;

“Whereas we believe that Mike Harris has a secret agenda to promote two-tier health care in Ontario and now the secret is out;

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

“Do not turn your back on Ontario's working families. Fight Mike Harris's agenda to destroy medicare and fight his plan to create a two-tier health care system.”

I sign my name to this, Mr Speaker, and give this over to Philip.

PROTECTION OF MINORS

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas children are being exposed to sexually explicit materials in many commercial establishments;

“Whereas many municipalities do not have bylaws in place to protect minors and those that do vary from place to place and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to sexually explicit materials;

“Whereas uniform standards are needed in Ontario that would make it illegal to sell, rent, loan or display sexually explicit materials to minors;

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

“To pass Bill 95, Protection of Minors from Sexually Explicit Goods and Services Act, 2000, as soon as possible.”

Since I am in agreement, I'm happy to sign my name to it.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“We the undersigned residents of, and visitors to, the county of Prince Edward petition the government of Ontario to recognize that the uncontrolled spread of intensive livestock operations and the field application of liquid manure poses a profound threat to our water, both ground and surface. Additionally, we have petitioned the government to acknowledge that the adverse effects of industrial livestock operations are widespread and have a deleterious effect on our environment, on our air and on our quality of life, and;

“Whereas under the existing laws of the province of Ontario there are no adequate controls directing the operation of such industrial farming operations, and;

“Whereas municipal bylaws are inadequate or non-existent and therefore controls should be exercised at the provincial level, and;

“Whereas the Ontario Environmental Commissioner recognizes in his report the potential for serious pollution of both our air and water from these operations;

“We therefore petition the Ontario Legislative Assembly to expedite the passing of legislation to regulate the operation of intensive livestock operations, specifically the spreading of manure therefrom and to distinguish such industrial operations from traditional farming practices.”

WATER QUALITY

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I'm pleased to have one of our new pages, Tyler Nixon, who's from Temple Baptist Christian Academy, take my petition to the table.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas it is a well-known fact that cattle are a significant source of dangerous strains of E coli bacteria; and

“Whereas cattle can be a serious source of degradation to rivers, streams and lakes through (1) defecating in or near the water, (2) breaking down and trampling banks and beaches, and (3) destroying vegetation in riparian zones; and

“Whereas many farmers permit their cattle to enter lakes and streams as a source of water;

“We, the undersigned, respectfully request the government of Ontario to pass binding legislation to establish mandatory setbacks for all watercourses, lakes and wetlands to prevent landowners or tenants from using

such watercourses, lakes and wetlands as a source of water for cattle or other animals;

“We further respectfully request that the legislation be drafted in such a way that it cannot be overturned by the Normal Farm Practices Protection Board or any other special-interest group.”

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

SAFE STREETS LEGISLATION

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): I have a petition from a non-profit organization from the village of Embrun.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas charities such as the Muscular Dystrophy Association of Canada, the Goodfellows, the Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, firefighters and many others participate in fundraising on streets, sidewalks and parking lots; and

“Whereas the Safe Streets Act, 1999, effectively bans these types of activities, putting police forces in the position of ignoring the law or hindering legitimate charities; and

“Whereas charitable organizations are dependent on these fundraisers to raise much-needed money and awareness;

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

“We ask that the government of Ontario amend provincial legislation by passing Bill 64, the Safe Streets Amendment Act, 2000, to allow charitable organizations to conduct fundraising campaigns on roadways, sidewalks and parking lots.”

I add my signature to the petition.

IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE POLICY

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads in part:

“Whereas Canada is a nation built by immigrant settlement; and

“Whereas the majority of new Canadians settle in Ontario; and

“Whereas effective settlement programs assist newcomers to integrate quickly into the economic and social fabric of Ontario's society; and

“Whereas fair funding is an essential component to effective settlement and the federal government is responsible for determining immigrant quotas; and

“Whereas” Ottawa “has entered into an agreement with Quebec to guarantee settlement funding regardless of target fulfillment; and

“Whereas no such agreement exists with other provinces, leading to inequitable settlement funding; and

“Whereas many new immigrants and refugees are denied access to basic settlement services as well as health, education, and ESL opportunities,

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

“That the government of Ontario will demand of Ottawa a similar immigration agreement with Ontario as that in Quebec, continue to encourage change in the immigration process to solve the plight of newcomers and their children, and address the issues of homelessness, hunger and poverty for new Canadians.”

I’m delighted to attach my signature to this petition.

1540

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): I have a petition which reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas domestic violence detrimentally impacts on the very survival of thousands of women in Ontario;

“Whereas the sole emphasis on punitive measures ignores that only a small fraction of domestic violence cases get to, let alone get through, the justice system;

“Whereas issues of prevention, investigation and redress of domestic violence need immediate and meaningful attention by the Legislature;

“We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

“(a) provide funding for second-stage housing, emergency shelters and to organizations concerned with domestic violence;

“(b) provide training on domestic violence issues for police, lawyers, judges and justices of the peace;

“(c) address recommendations from the May-Iles inquest regarding the capacity of this province to prevent, investigate and redress acts of violence in the family;

“(d) promote studies on the causes, nature, prevalence and consequences of domestic violence and on the capacities in Ontario to prevent, investigate and redress acts of violence in the family.”

I will affix my signature to this petition.

POVERTY

Mr Mario Sergio (York West): I have a 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 with the content of the petition and I will affix my signature to it.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ONTARIO STUDENT LOAN HARMONIZATION ACT, 2001

LOI DE 2001 SUR L’HARMONISATION DES PRÊTS D’ÉTUDES DE L’ONTARIO

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 3, 2001, on the motion for second reading of Bill 19, An Act to amend the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act / Projet de loi 19, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le ministère de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités.

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

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): Thank you, Speaker.

Mr John O’Toole (Durham): Are you going to take the full hour?

Mr Marchese: You know that I need the entire hour to be able to communicate all the things that I want to—

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: Speaker, I’m happy to be able to debate this Bill 19. I just want to let folks know that it’s a quarter to 4 of the clock and I should be on for approximately one hour. I hope to be able to cover as much as I possibly can, because post-secondary education is a serious concern for the majority of Ontarians out there. I’ll refer—

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: Well, it’s true and you know that. I’ll make reference to the poll that was just released today at a press conference that speaks to the profound worries that parents have—parents and non-parents alike. In fact, even more people without children are now worried about the fact that many young people are not going to get to university or college than those with kids, but nevertheless it’s very high.

Speaking briefly and then making all the arguments that are connected to this issue: Bill 19, some argue, is just a little housekeeping thing. The federal government of course had to take over student loans from the banks because high default rates did not make lending to students sufficiently profitable. This bill’s accomplishing the same principle is the point of it.

Isn’t it funny that when the private sector says, “We’re not making money out of this venture,” they just give it right back to the government? When they make money and sufficient profits they say, “Give it to us. We like it. We’ll deliver it more efficiently.” This is the problem with these kinds of programs, because as soon as the

private sector, in this case the banks, realizes there is no pecunia to be made out of this deal, they say, "We're out." Of course, who is again back in the field to provide the loans? It's the good old government.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): Maybe just not enough pecunia.

Mr Marchese: Well, they weren't making enough—no, obviously, they were—

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: You're quite right, Peter. They might have made a couple of bucks out of it, but they said to themselves, "Is it worth the headache?" Is it worth the headache to have such a program when the money, as Peter said, is not high enough? It's not worth the administration, the headaches, the worries of a program unless the profits are high enough. That's what the private sector is all about. I wanted to make that point, because that's really what this bill is all about.

Then, of course, I wanted to talk about the real problems in education, because that's what, in my view, we have to talk about.

I was reminded yesterday of an argument that the Minister of Labour made in relation to a question when he used comparisons. I'll refer to it so that it makes sense and so that I won't make any mistakes in paraphrasing the minister. But our leader was talking about increasing the minimum wage, and it's something that New Democrats feel strongly about because there are a whole lot of people in the service sector earning just a meagre sum of money.

Mr Kormos: It's \$6.85.

Mr Marchese: What they earn is \$6.85 an hour.

Mr Kormos: For six years now.

Mr Marchese: For a whole long time.

Mr Kormos: When the Tories wanted to increase their salaries by 42%, what did they give people on minimum wage?

Mr Marchese: Those on minimum wage just have to live with \$6.85 an hour. And, yes, it's been a whole long six years. "Too bad, so sad," the Minister of Labour says. "Not my problem. It's not my problem that they're earning that much. In fact," he says, "we're very competitive."

Here's his response to our leader in this regard. I'll read the whole thing. "During the 1990s, the minimum wage was raised by 37%." We're proud of that. We were proud of raising the minimum wage because we think a whole lot of people out there, working people, just earning a meagre sum of money deserve a little more, especially in the cities, where you just can't live on that kind of money. You just can't, unless of course you tighten your belts on all matters of necessity, such as eating, how you dress, clothing. I suppose you could just wear anything, really. It doesn't have to be something that is, what—

Mr Kormos: It doesn't have to be a suit and tie.

Mr Marchese: It doesn't have to be suit and tie, surely not. It could just be a shirt, whatever, a pair of pants, it doesn't matter; whatever shoes you can wear so

not as to walk on, who knows, glass on the street. It doesn't matter, I suppose. But some people like to dress somewhat decently if they can afford it. But a whole lot of people, at \$6.85, can't afford decent clothes. They can't afford decent food and they certainly can't afford the kinds of rents that we are witnessing under your government—

Mr Kormos: The Harris government.

Mr Marchese: —under the Harris government, of late. In the last couple of years rents have skyrocketed—\$1,300 a month for a two-bedroom apartment. We're talking about people who, out of the 3.3 million tenants, earn what? Less than \$23,000. A third of them probably earn less than \$23,000 a year. Do you know what that means? It's hard for those of us earning \$80,000 to relate to it, but try to relate to someone earning \$23,000 a year, living in these private sector apartments; earning that much and paying so much rent. Why? You people decided you wanted to decontrol rents, because controlling rents, you said, was bad, bad, bad. And you said once you decontrol rents, the building of private sector accommodation is just going to shoot right up.

Mr Kormos: What a joke.

Mr Marchese: It's not just a joke, it's pitiful. It's foolish. We knew that you weren't going to build.

So the point I make is that a whole lot of people earn so little. The New Democrats, yes, of course, with pride say we need to increase the minimum wage, and we did. And Stockwell reminds us of that. I go on.

"There was a fairly substantial increase to the minimum wage at that time. We understood that fact. When we came into government, there was a 37% increase," he repeats again. "We are very competitive with neighbouring jurisdictions. We rank third in Canada, and we're very competitive with our neighbours to the south.

"The arguments that you," referring to our leader, "continue to put forward are premised on I'm not sure exactly what," he says. "From our comparative notes and studies that we've done, we are not at the top, agreed, but we aren't anywhere near the bottom of the minimum wage in this country. We are at the top third of provinces in this country. So as far as I'm concerned, the minimum wage needs to be at a competitive rate. The competitive rate that we have pegged it at, at this point in time, we think is competitive and, by jurisdiction, a fair remuneration."

Anyway, it was a whole lot of blah.

1550

To simply say that if you use comparisons—he says, "We're not up here in terms of the minimum wage, but we're not down here." I found the argument interesting, because if you use that argument on the basis of minimum wage—by the way, we disagree with him on that. But if you use that argument, following his logic, if we applied it to education, we've got serious problems because, good citizens, when it comes to education, in a study called Missing Pieces II, An Alternative Guide to Canadian Post-Secondary Education: Provincial Rankings, where do the provinces stand on education? On the

issue of provincial expenditures per capita, we're number nine, and on the per capita university operating grants we're number 10.

The point I wanted to make is that on these rankings we are, generally speaking, at the very bottom. If you follow the logic of Stockwell, we are in trouble and we ought to be addressing this problem, because clearly we are not spending near the level we should be spending at to be competitive. You follow what I'm saying, Speaker? I quoted Stockwell as a way of making sure the Tories who are listening in this House understand that on the basis of comparisons, we're here at the bottom. It speaks to the fact that the underfunding of our post-secondary education is serious enough that this government ought to worry about it and that, good citizens, on the basis of comparisons alone we are not competitive within Canada, and certainly we're not competitive when we consider the United States. We rank, I'm not sure, 52 out of 53 or 54 jurisdictions in North America. We are, good citizens of Ontario and taxpayers of Ontario, at the bottom of the barrel.

M. Stockwell, mon ami, when he reflects on this and when he speaks again to this issue of minimum wages, might be careful, because when he makes that comparison people like Marchese are going to make the other comparison with respect to post-secondary education as a way of trying to convince him that he has to, when using the same logic, come to the same conclusion I am, and that is, we've got a big problem in this province.

Today, there was a release of polling done by Ipsos-Reid which shows that parents of this province and non-parents alike are very concerned about what's happening with respect to issues of accessibility and young people's ability to get to a college and a university. They're so profoundly worried that they're directing this government to fix the problem. The polls say that increased provincial funding garners the support of Ontarians across all the major political parties, including decided New Democrats, 74%, decided Liberals, 69%, and Progressive Conservatives, 53%.

It's a staggering figure, because while you might think it's only New Democrats and, to a great extent, Liberal supporters who think we've got an access problem, Tories believe the same thing.

Sixty-eight per cent of women are more likely than men—59% of them—to opt for increased provincial funding, even though this may result in a cancellation of the planned tax cuts or reduced spending in other areas.

It's a remarkable finding. I suggest, Speaker, to you and your caucus that you have to pay attention to these things. This is a large number of people. This is Ipsos-Reid polling, someone that you are very familiar with, so I'm not sure you're disputing the figures, who is saying to you that two thirds of the population is profoundly worried about the direction in which you are moving and so concerned that they're saying to you, "You've got to listen to what we're saying." I'm not quite sure who you're listening to.

My sense is that you've got a revenue problem. I'm not quite sure what you will announce when the budget comes forth, but the economy has definitely slowed down, so you have a revenue problem again. While you didn't have a revenue problem from 1995 to the year 2000, you are about to experience a funding problem, a revenue problem.

While you could have fixed the problems connected to health and education—elementary, secondary and post-secondary—you didn't. You took money out of the system. You won't be able to put much back into the system because, continuing with your desire to give the kinds of income tax cuts that you people are committed to, you won't have the money.

In the next two years, you're going to blow 12 billion bucks—gone, out the window—and you won't be able to get it back again. You people won't tax these folks again, so \$12 billion is going out and less revenue is coming in. Income tax cuts are going out to the corporate and individual sector. There is less revenue. You'll have more welfare down the line, because when the economy slows down and unemployment goes up, you'll see a whole lot of people going back to welfare again.

You folks know you've got a revenue problem, so you have delayed announcing what the operating funds are for boards of education. Cities have not been able to put out their budgets because you haven't announced what the education rates are going to be, because you don't really know what you can give. You don't have a sense of that. You are in such disarray that you people are holding back as long as you can to get a fairer sense of what it is you can afford to give out. And my sense is that it's not a whole lot, because once the income tax cuts go out, you've got little else to spread around.

That's why my prediction is that you will not give much to the college and university system, because you haven't got a whole lot to give. That's why I often say that when you had good economic times, you could have helped the college and university system. Through your imaginings, you invent such figures about what it is you're doing for the post-secondary education system and those students. You invent things. Out of the blue you say, "We're doing this, we're doing that," and when we come forward with different kinds of statistical information, you simply pretend you don't hear it.

You know and the public knows that tuition fees have gone up 60% in the regular general study field. That's a whole lot of money. They've more than doubled since New Democrats were in, during a recession. Rates have doubled while you've had an good economy for five years.

Mr Kormos: Six.

Mr Marchese: Now six years. Students are paying more in tuition fees than we've ever seen before—a 60% increase in tuition. How do you explain that, when you've had so much money coming into your government coffers? What the heck are you people doing with our money? That's the question taxpayers are asking: "Where is our money going?" It's certainly not going to

the post-secondary education system, because tuition fees are going up. And do you know why they're going up? Because governments are funding our post-secondary institutions less today than we did prior to 1995. Tuitions are skyrocketing. In some of the deregulated programs, such as medicine, tuition fees have gone up by a staggering 500%. In many of these deregulated programs, tuition fees have skyrocketed to a point of 500% or more. How do you people defend that? I don't know how you defend it. Quite frankly, I'm flabbergasted at the arguments you use to defend such a thing.

We know from Statistics Canada information, the study they have done, that students from lower-income families are choosing not to go to university—but choosing on the basis that they can't afford it. That means access is being restricted to the people who need it most to be able to break the cycle they might find themselves in.

1600

If university—and education in general—is supposed to be the great equalizer and we are cutting off access, it means we are not equalizing opportunities for those who come from lower-income families versus those who come from high-income families. We're not equalizing opportunities at all. You people are restricting access, and your fine statement about "Anyone who has any kind of financial needs need not worry. We will guarantee them access"—ha.

The fact of the matter is that middle-class students, many of them, are not eligible for loans, and those who might be receive such low levels relative to the high increases in tuition fees that they can't afford to pay the kinds of increases you people have levied against them. They can't afford it. So even those who might be entitled to a loan are going to be stuck with tremendous debt burdens that they may not be able to pay very easily once they graduate from who knows what programs.

Statistics Canada information reveals fewer students from lower-income families are getting to university and the college system, which ought to be telling you that we have a problem. Education is not equalizing our opportunities, and I've often argued that. Yes, it ought to be the great equalizer, but it never is or is not the way it ought to be. That's why New Democrats argue that we need to look at our primary grades, our young years, where we can equalize the opportunities for young people in a way that nothing else can. Those early years are so critical to shaping better minds, which are better equipped to cope with an educational system once they come in to a JK, with you people, now half a day; and SK, with you folks—well, in some cases a full day and in some cases not. But if you equalize the opportunities in those early years from ages two to five, yes, you are equalizing opportunities for students. That's where education can be the great equalizer, and that's what you people should commit yourselves to. New Democrats are committed to that.

But at the moment your underfunding of our system is making it harder and harder to give the kind of equality

to students that is desperately needed. So the well-to-do will do fine and those who are not well-to-do will not do as well as they ought to be doing. We have argued that you have cut \$2 billion cumulatively in funding to community colleges and the university sector in the last five years—\$2 billion less cumulatively than ever before. How do you justify that in a good economy? The point is, you won't be able to correct it as the economy begins to slip, and you know that it's slipping. The Minister of Finance knows that it's slipping. That's why he is not announcing the grant funding to our boards of education, because he doesn't know. He doesn't know what the revenues are going to be for the next little while so he's holding back, he's waiting as long as he possibly can to get a grip on what he's got and recklessly saying, "We're going to continue with our income tax cuts to the private sector and to individuals, no matter what." Recklessly, I say; with wild abandon they do such things. And our systems are suffering.

Everyone is saying to us that at the rate this society is changing, with e-commerce in full swing, we needed an educated workforce to be able to deal with the kinds of changes that are fast approaching all of us in society. Yet we are spending less. We're number 10. We are spending less than most jurisdictions in North America, while at the same time everyone is acknowledging that we need to be able to invest in research and to invest in human resources, human capital, because that's what's going to give us the competitive edge. People give us the competitive edge. Investing in people will give us the kind of edge we're looking for. Yet we are number 10 in these areas, in these rankings, where it most counts. How do you explain that? How can you be competitive when you are underinvesting in the sector that you need to invest in? I don't know how you do it.

Your loans are not keeping up with the kinds of increases that people are facing. Many of them still have to pay for rent and food and loans that are beyond their ability to pay. They're not keeping up and all the studies reveal that we've got a big problem on our hands. But you pretend that nothing is happening. You pretend and you invent figures that say, "No, we're investing more than ever before."

Good citizens of Ontario, we're going to have 90,000 more students in the next eight or nine years; 90,000 more students. How is this government going to accommodate these students when they are not investing enough to be able to build to accommodate these 90,000 more students? They say that their funding is going to accommodate them, but universities and colleges know it's not sufficient. They say they have a plan, but we don't know what this plan is, other than the fact that they've got a plan to accommodate 90,000 students. Do you know how many 90,000 students are? They are a lot. And they cannot be accommodated at the rate at which you people are investing in capital expenditures.

This plan obviously is in your own imagination. It is a mythology you are building within your little heads trying to convince the taxpayers of Ontario that you

people know what you're doing. Yet universities have been telling you, "We have a serious problem on our hands," and you just say, "Not to worry, good taxpayers, we're in control." They're worried. The Ipsos-Reid polling reveals 70% of them are profoundly worried about students' ability to get into university, or college, for that matter—profoundly worried.

We have a need in the next five, six, seven years to hire 15,000 more professors. Is this government dealing with the fact that we have a shortage of university professors? When are we going to deal with it? Where is this plan that ought to be in place at the moment to deal with the shortage of university professors? They are retiring in the next couple of years at a rate that we are unable to accommodate that problem. But the Tories say, "Don't worry, we've got a plan." The plan ought to be in place now, because we know that we have a problem on our hands.

The double cohort is part of that additional 90,000 students we're going to be getting in the next seven, eight years, but the double cohort comes in 2003. How are you people dealing with the fact that when the grade 13s and the grade 12s meet, which is in a couple of years, we're going to have an abundance of students trying to get into our university system? You don't have the capacity to get them into the universities, except for your promises, "Don't worry, taxpayers, they will fit in somewhere."

We have an incredibly high ratio of students to professors, yet this government tells you not to worry, "We will accommodate them." Taxpayers, who do you believe? I know that I believe you more than I believe this government, and I know that you believe me more because of the polling that was just released today that says you don't trust this government, and neither do I.

Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): Oh no, you do. Say it isn't so.

Mr Marchese: Mais oui, former monsieur le ministre. Sit down and join us. Don't go away. Please join us. Participate in this debate. He's leaving, because he knows the truth. He knows that Ipsos-Reid isn't just another polling firm that you can't trust. These folks can be trusted, right? There are some firms where the polling may or may not be as trustworthy. But they all say, "Give or take, folks, one way or the other." They'll normally say that. I believe these folks.

It isn't just a worry of mine as a parent of three children, one of whom is already in university, the other I hope will attend university, and the third in a couple of years. I am profoundly worried, and I often say that if I am worried, as a parent who earns 80,000 bucks, imagine those other middle-class parents who earn less than I do. I am worried for my children and I am worried for some of your children as well. Because while you pretend you are worried I don't see an action plan that says, "We have a plan that's going to address all of these concerns."

1610

Students are paying more now to fund their own education than ever before. The Tories used to say that 25% of operating dollars for universities ought to be paid

by students. That threshold under the Tories then moved to 30%, and that threshold is moving higher and higher every year. The minister says, "Don't worry, we put a cap on tuition fees of 2%." Ha, as if 60% wasn't enough, as if 60% was just a small figure, she tries to convince you, taxpayer, that the additional 2% for the next three or four years is not a problem, that it should be manageable by students.

More and more of our education at the post-secondary level is being paid by you, students, and by you, good taxpayers, indirectly. So you're getting a tax cut. That tax cut you got, whether you're earning \$60,000 or less or even \$70,000 or less, isn't paying for the tuition increases that we've witnessed under this government. That's the question for you, taxpayer, because while you love to get that money in your pocket, you say, and while the former finance minister, M. Eves, says, "This ain't our money, this is the taxpayers' money," OK, now you've got that taxpayers' money back, is it paying for the tuition increases we have witnessed and suffered under in the last six years? It's not. You know that. You know that it could never make up for those kinds of increases. I'm just talking about post-secondary education.

This government loves to talk about the fact, "Oh, the tax cut is what will create a recession-proof economy." The Premier argued that. They argue that with that additional money you got in your pockets as the result of the tax cut, well, it's keeping the economy growing unlike you've ever seen before. But you know, taxpayers, two things are happening: one, the gap between those who earn a lot and those who are earning less is increasing, and you also know that that tax cut you got is not paying for fundamental issues like post-secondary education. You know that.

You also know that you are not sharing in the wealth, that in the last five or six years a whole lot of people, yes, in the e-commerce economy, are earning or have earned a whole lot of money. Harris says, "We have growth that we haven't seen in a long time—yes, thanks to us, and thanks to the tax cut." And you're saying, good taxpayer out there, "Gee, I haven't seen this kind of growth in my pockets. Good God, something is happening." The middle class is disappearing under your fine tutelage, because under the federal Liberals and the provincial Conservatives the gap between those who are earning a lot of money and those who are earning less is increasing. What does it tell you, John? It's telling you that in between, people are being squeezed downwards, and the taxpayers know that.

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North): You must be an interplanetary space traveller.

Mr Marchese: No, member from Etobicoke North, I don't travel in space, because I'm the kind of guy who likes his feet firmly on the ground, I do. I know the Tories have flights of fancy. But me, I'm the kind of guy who loves Mother Earth. I just like to stay close to it; going up there and going down there are two things I'd rather not do, because it scares me. That's why I speak to you taxpayers as someone firmly rooted on Mother Earth

as a way of suggesting to you that you people haven't seen the kind of wealth that the Tories are saying is out there. You're scratching your head, saying, "Gee, I want some of that wealth. I want it in my pocket, and it ought not to be because of the tax cuts that are draining our revenues; it ought to be because I'm getting well paid and I'm maintaining my status as a Canadian who says, 'By working hard I'm going to be up here.' A whole lot of Canadians are working hard and they're saying, "I'm not here any more; I am gradually slipping down that ladder."

Mr Hastings: Where are you?

Mr Marchese: Me? Me and you, John, member for Etobicoke North, we are the top 10 percentile.

Mr Hastings: No, we're not.

Mr Marchese: We're the top 10. With our salaries we're up here. I can't even afford to pay tuition for my daughter and I'm up here, the top 10% of income earners. I don't know how you people are doing it, but maybe some of you have deeper pockets than New Democrats do; I suspect that's the case. That's why New Democrats argue for a system that's accessible, because I am one who believes that hard-working people who earn \$30,000, \$40,000, \$50,000, \$60,000, \$70,000 are not getting the break that they need, and it's all happening under your careful watch. They're not getting the support that they need.

I know, John, you're bored, because you like to have those kinds of fundraisers that reach out to those people who can afford to dish out \$600 to come and listen to M. Harris, the Premier. That's the kind of crowd you guys like.

Mr Hastings: You don't like Frank Stronach.

Mr Marchese: No, I have nothing against some of these wealthy individuals. Stronach? I don't know him, but he earns \$40 million a year. God bless his little soul—\$40 million a year. That kind of guy probably buys a whole table to listen to the wonders of Mike Harris's announcements. With \$40 million, \$500, \$600, \$700 a pop is not a big deal for him. But for those hard-working families, I tell you, they can never make it to hear Mike. They could never go to a fundraiser and say to Mike, "I've got a few concerns I want to share with you." They'll never get there.

I am speaking to so many concerns that the public have that we need to address. If we don't address it the problem will get worse. One of the things that you people proposed was the privatization of post-secondary education. You put that out as one of the solutions to deal with the issue of the double cohort, with the issue of the increased number of students we will have in the next five, six, seven, eight years. You did. I remember the parliamentary assistant saying, "No, that's not true, the minister didn't say that," but, yes, it is; the minister did say that on a number of occasions.

I often argue, how can a private university help those students who are crying out for support? How does it help those parents who are crying out to you, as the government, for help? How does a private system, where

tuition fees might be \$20,000 a year, or what a year? Maybe \$10,000, \$8,000? It's in that vicinity: \$8,000, \$9,000, \$10,000. How does that help a working-class kid who can't even pay the kind of tuition fees he's got to pay now? That young man or woman who is in a family whose income is \$30,000, \$40,000, \$50,000, \$60,000, \$70,000 will never get into that private university.

You have built an institution entirely devoted to the wealthy, maybe Stronach types. How is that going to help, qualitatively, me, my children or the children of the hard-working people in Ontario? It isn't. How many students can this private university absorb to deal with the enrolment increase that we're facing in the next five, six, seven years? It doesn't. It's but a pittance. I'm not sure; it might accommodate let's just say 1,000. I'm not sure what you or the minister has suggested might be the attendance or the participation in such a private university, but let's just say 1,000. How will that ever help to deal with the 90,000 more students we're going to get in the next eight years? It just doesn't deal with it at all, except what you have done is give choice to the very wealthy to be able to go to their own private little club. It's a club of the well-to-do, that's what it is. Those people who come from a certain class will be able to continue to see each other from a private high school into the university system so they can continue their class connections to each other because people who have high incomes love to stay together. It's a way of perpetuating their own class, so as not to mix with the rabble out there because that would be so unacceptable to them, so that their class system won't be tainted by all these possibly working-class kids that might go to the same university. That's what this is about. It's about creating a little club for the rich and it doesn't deal with issues of access in the way that we are talking and in the way that people fear.

1620

We also are putting the entire public system in jeopardy by opening it to the market. That is an argument New Democrats make. According to international trade rules, once a service is open to the market it can't be taken back, and once American private, for-profit operators start to set up shop in Ontario, the government may have either to stop supporting public institutions or start subsidizing for-profit outfits. That's the fear we have. That's the big, big fear. It ought to be something you're concerned about, yet you fine people are oblivious to that kind of circumstance, to that kind of consequence. You're not even considering it.

In fact, you may have been considering it because we've asked for that information to be released and you folks have put roadblocks in front of that request from day one. I suspect what we might find is that there is a real danger and a real risk that once you open this sector up to the for-profit university sector it has implications that will be disastrous for public policy in this province. You're giving away your own power. You're giving away control. You're giving away something that ought to be a concern of government so we don't give away to

the private sector, which is there for profit, more than they want and more than they ever need.

We want public institutions that are well-funded so that everyone benefits, not certain sheltered, privileged, special friends of yours. We've asked the government to release this study they have commissioned on the implications of what it means to fund for-profit operators in this province. We are sufficiently concerned that we have raised it as an issue.

So how does this government deal with the problem of access, with the problem of accommodating 90,000 students? They have decided that with this looming crisis we will privatize post-secondary education and we generally will promote privatization and the corporatization of this sector. We're getting more and more private sector involvement at the university level than we've ever seen. In fact, this government is proud of saying, "We don't mind the private sector coming into our university system. We don't mind it at all. We're not afraid of the competition from the private sector; in fact, we love it. We're not afraid if the private sector invests millions and millions of dollars in the university or college system because if they want to give \$20 million or \$10 million for a proposed program, it's not a big deal."

I tell you it is. Corporations don't invest in the private sector because they are good, humane corporate citizens. They invest because there is something in it for them. Corporate involvement is there for one purpose alone: to influence their specific corporate agenda. If it's a drug company, they want to make sure that they influence public policy as it relates to drugs and what is tested and what is put out on the market and what is not, what we publish and what we will not publish. You understand that, Speaker. They are there for one reason alone: to direct public policy—not to be neutral or to be out of their involvement with the institution; they are there to influence it. That's why they are giving money. You people ought to be worried about it. Students are profoundly worried about it and certainly Marchese is profoundly worried about that.

Classrooms bear the biggest brunt of the cuts to post-secondary education. That means that the impact of spending reductions is being felt most immediately by Ontario students, who are being hit by a double whammy of higher tuition fees and a poorer learning environment. Nobody seems to worry that class sizes at the post-secondary level are so high that learning is very difficult, that approaching a university with questions is very difficult. There are so many students in these classrooms that the quality of education and the quality of learning are being affected by these policies.

We look at the high school system now and we look at the \$1.5 billion in cuts that you have made. Through Bill 74, you are forcing teachers to teach a higher load, a bigger load than ever before. I pointed out that when teachers are unhappy, you have an environment where learning is difficult, if not impossible. You have an environment where students are not learning what they should.

You create a burden for, as an example, an English teacher who has yet a bigger load to carry, who has a hell of a time assigning papers—essays four pages long, six pages long, 10 pages long—and has to mark so many that when you increase the load to just that English teacher, as an example, you make it harder for them to be able to give out more assignments even if they wanted to, even if they could and even if they had the energy to do it.

When students don't get the opportunity to write papers and to write more than ever before so that through the practice of writing they improve their skills, you have a university sector saying, "These students we are getting can't write." The climate you create, whether it's at the elementary level, the secondary level or the university level, is a critical part of learning.

The reason I bring in the high school sector is to suggest that you have eroded the quality of education in the high schools in ways that you have hurt it. When you compressed the curriculum from five years to four years, you made learning more difficult for a lot more students. While many students coming from a higher-income class of people might be able to cope with it, a whole lot of other people from lower incomes may not.

What have you done as a government to assist them? You've done nothing. They weren't getting the kind of remedial help that is so desperately needed by the students to help them cope with a compressed curriculum. They weren't getting any help at all. In some cases they didn't even have the textbooks to help them out. In most cases they don't even have a librarian to go to, to get assistance, to be able to write a paper. You created a climate where learning is more and more impossible, and that affects how kids learn, it affects the quality of education and it affects who succeeds and who doesn't succeed.

What do you do as a Conservative government? What are the implications of that, I mean? You perpetuate a class system. You perpetuate it in a way that you are not able to have the education system be the great equalizer that it should be.

We have, at the university level, institutions that are falling apart. We have aging buildings that are not being repaired because there is no money to repair them. While you gloat over the fact that you're putting in so much more money than any other previous government, including New Democrats before you, and Liberals before us, while you make that preposterous claim, the buildings are aging and they're not being repaired. Students are learning in an environment which is, dare I say, not very healthy.

1630

I say to Minister Cunningham, release some studies that show that your policies are not affecting lower-income students or working-class students. If you've done your studies, release them. Show them to me so that I could feel a little better. Show them to the public so they could feel that somehow you've got a plan. But without research, all that people can do is worry, and rightfully so.

You would think normally that you would be listening to a public that has these immense concerns, because I've got to tell you, Minister Cunningham, I know that you're doing polling and I know that your Premier does polling on a regular basis; in fact, more polling than we've ever seen before. Even though the Premier claims that you're spending less on polling than any previous government, we know you've got loads and loads of money that you pour into understanding where the public is at. I know that if you're doing this polling you ought to be concerned about what these people are saying: 70% of the public is saying they have serious doubts about young people being able to attend university or college, even if they are qualified. Do you understand what that means, 70%?

I would have understood if it was 30% feeling somewhat concerned or very concerned. I would have understood that you as a government would say, "We've got no problem. We don't have to worry about what the public feels until it gets to a range of 45%, 50%, 55%, 60%." I understand that. But if the range is 70%, as I've indicated in this Ipsos-Reid polling, I would think that you would be aware of it, that you in fact have been doing your own polling and that it shows that is the case, and that when the budget announcement is made on Wednesday, the minister, M. Flaherty, is going to give the \$500 million that has been requested by this report of the Task Force on Investing in Students, entitled *Portals and Pathways*.

It's a report that was commissioned not by me, not by Liberals; it was commissioned by you. Madam Cunningham, it was done by you, not me. These fine people have said you are underinvesting. These fine people have said you've got to put in \$500 million in the next couple of years, because they know you've taken a whole lot of money out. And we can't begin to do the repair unless money is invested once again into the community college and university sector. You've got to listen to these people, especially if you put together such a group. What amazes me is that when you put a group together, you seem to take reports and recommendations that are pleasing to you, but when they are not so pleasant you decide, "We'll just have to wait awhile. No, we're not scrapping the report. We're simply reviewing it and studying it," for months and months and months, and in some cases you just leave it on the shelf. If you like the proposals that are made to you by the various committees that you put together, you take the recommendations and immediately implement them. But if you don't like it you say, "No, we're not scrapping it; we're just considering it, mulling it over."

I'm suggesting to you, Madam Cunningham, that this is one report you've got to mull over very carefully. These people are saying we need an investment which is not equal to what you have taken out, because remember, I have argued and others have argued, well documented, that \$2 billion has been taken out cumulatively over the last five years—\$2 billion. The \$500 million requested only moves the threshold a little bit. It's simply not

sufficient, but it gets us on the way to dealing with an economy out there that is waiting for investments in human beings. We have to invest in human capital more than anything else in order to be competitive with other sectors, with other jurisdictions, be it in Canada, be it in the US. At the rate that you are going, we're not there. So I am waiting with interest to see whether or not the Treasurer is going to invest in post-secondary education.

I was at a meeting a couple of weeks ago in the north end. I found the parents of that meeting, about 300, so very polite I couldn't believe it. We had a ministry spokesperson who was telling us not to worry about the fact that 90,000 students are coming, as enrolments are a preoccupation of all of us. We don't have to worry because the government is taking care of that. I found it so surprising that not one of the parents raised the question of tuition fees. I couldn't believe it.

I was equally surprised that they didn't attack this government on the cutbacks to the sector. All they were worried about was the double cohort, and would the university system accommodate their kids, and they were told not to worry. The recommendation that was made by one or two of those individuals was that we keep an eye on the budget announcement.

I couldn't believe that all 300 of those people didn't say, "We've got to call Minister Young, we've got to call all these ministers in Toronto to remind them that this is a serious concern, and that when the budget announcement is there, we want to make sure the money is put into place," to guarantee that their children will be able to get into university without the worry they have. They were just told, "Keep an eye on the budget announcement." Three hundred capable people who could lobby these guys so effectively wanted to keep the meeting non-political and just wanted information. They were just going to keep an eye on the budget announcement to see whether or not money was going to be put into the private sector.

"Man," I was thinking to myself, "a couple of hundred people calling Stockwell to say to him, 'Minister Stockwell, we got a problem here. What are you going to do about it?'" I would have loved that. Or 200 people calling Minister Young, saying, "Minister Young"—because many of those people are in his constituency—"we've got a serious concern of access and we want to know what kinds of investments you are going to make to the post-secondary educational system to guarantee that when the double cohort kicks in in a couple of years, my kid, in spite of the fact that he has good marks"—not in spite of—"that he will get in, even with good marks," because they're worried that some of them might not even have high enough marks, beyond 80%, to be able to get in in some of these jurisdictions.

But don't worry, because they can go to other provinces, eh, Minister of Labour, like the nurses. If they don't get a job here and they don't like it here, they can just go to Alberta, I suppose, and get a job there. And if they don't get into this university, our fine institutions, good God, so many other universities across Canada will

take them in. Ha. Yes, access across Canada. "Don't you worry if you can't get into U of T. You can get into some other jurisdiction in Nova Scotia, no problemo."

People are profoundly worried. I urge you, citizens and taxpayers, that if you are worried—you just can't wait for the budget to be announced and hope that somehow that \$500 million is going to be there to begin to manage the damage, you can't—call Stockwell. He's right there, he's directly in front of me. Call him up. Call Minister Young. Go to his office.

Good people, good taxpayers, citizens, you can't just wait for the miracle to happen, because these people—there are no miracles except that tough agenda that says, "We've got to tighten our belts a little more. We had a good economy, we gave you the tax cuts, but now, too bad, so sad, there isn't much money. You've got to tighten your belts. Yes, we had good times, and you weren't able to share in them as well as you might have wanted to, but now we've got to tighten the belts."

You've got to go, you've got to meet with these people in their offices and, with the facts in your hand, sit down with these fine people and say, "How are you going to deal with it?" If Minister Stockwell says, "I'm too busy because I'm the Minister," you've got to go to him and say, "Sorry, you represent me and I want a meeting with you." A whole lot of these people are saying, "We're too busy, sorry; too bad, so sad, we can't see you."

1640

I am saying to you that these politicians are your servants, not the other way around. So you've got to go to Minister Turnbull and sit down with him and say, "What are you going to do to make sure that when the double cohort comes, my kids will get into that university?" He'll have to defend himself. If you're properly armed, you'll be able to say that they have no plan, that the investments are not there, and you will have to lobby—and some of you are strong in your ability to lobby these people. You can't leave it to a few citizens to do the job that is required by the many. You can't.

We require an active citizenry to be able to change the direction of that government. I tell you this government is bad, woefully bad. I can't solve it for you. I can't change these people. You know that. You can. If 70% of you believe that you don't have access and your young people are not going to be able to get to university, that's powerful. If you sit down with any of these people in an organized fashion across Ontario, they will get to their caucus meetings when they have them on Tuesdays and each one will report—because Harris will say, "OK, what's up in your riding? What's up in your riding?"—"We've got a problem from people in the post-secondary education sector who are highly concerned about what's going on and we've got to deal with it." All it takes is 20 or 30 of you in each riding—20 or 30 of you.

Don't send letters, because they won't see them. If you're going to send a letter, make sure it's "private and confidential" so it gets in Stockwell's hands. Otherwise, it goes through the civil service and, by the time Stock-

well gets it, he's out of office. Please, if you're going to write a letter, it's got to say "private and confidential" on that envelope so that the politician will get it, so his political staff will get that envelope and show it to M. Stockwell, the Minister of Labour. That's what you've got to do.

But you need to see them face to face. You can't just send some letter that goes nowhere. You've got to meet with them face to face to be able to deal with the crisis we have in so many sectors, and today we're just dealing with post-secondary education and our college and university system. The crisis is real. I urge you to get involved.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Questions and comments?

Mr O'Toole: I always appreciate listening to the member for Trinity-Spadina.

In response to remarks I made last Thursday, May 3, in the House, I want to clear up the record a little bit. I have about 100 e-mails from many upset medical students. Most of what I said during my 10 or 15 minutes was with respect to my own five children, who either have graduated or are still in university, and the undergraduate dilemma for students attending university.

For a few moments I digressed to discussions with respect to medical students. I first want to make it clear that I apologize for misstating, perhaps, as they've suggested, the representation that when they're going to medical school, the four years of medical school has a cost component of about \$30,000 a year. Their tuition, they're telling me, is between \$10,000 and \$15,000, of which the province provides up to \$11,000, of which anything over \$7,000 is forgivable. I equated that to four years of medical school times \$7,000, and that's \$28,000, which in fact is the case. Many have an undergraduate degree with student debt attached to that, which becomes a problem.

But more important is this, on further listening and reading many of these e-mails: they have a residency program, and they work for another four years or more in a residency program making between \$30,000 and \$40,000, with a debt load of about \$100,000 accumulating interest on a line of credit. So they do have a significant debt load.

I think the most important thing I wanted to say was that I appreciate that we need a method of ensuring our medical students stay in Ontario and provide high-quality health care. If we don't find ways and mechanisms, we'll have a problem.

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): I will acknowledge the nobility with which the member for Durham has withdrawn or restated his position. I think that's very legitimate for the medical students, who understand the circumstances more deeply than probably every single one of us in this particular House.

To the member for Trinity-Spadina, I would ask him to stay the course because he's the social justice conscience. He's trying to make sure that with this bill that's being spoken of this afternoon there are wider and deeper

ramifications. The bill, on its own merits, is going to be talking specifically about making sure the loan structure is in place and proper for the students of Ontario, but the consequences of not changing that are going to be very disastrous for our students and it will absolutely ensure our students who are in financial need will not go to college or university.

In terms of the bill itself, I think we need to make sure we stay focused, that at least it has to be done, but the overriding issue that's being talked of today is the fact that there are gaps that have been created. The member spoke quite eloquently about the realities that our students are facing today, who need support, who need understanding and need the money that's necessary for a government to entice our students. We're talking about the future.

I want to expand it even further for the member for Trinity-Spadina because this ties into our health care system. This ties into our social networks. This ties into all of what we hold dear as citizens of Ontario. It's very apropos that he spent his time speaking about the broader issue and I think it's very apropos that if the government was listening, they would agree with him that we look at it in a bigger context than simply changing one set of rules to fit another because the banks have decided to withdraw from providing loans.

Mr Kormos: Once again, the member for Trinity-Spadina has hit the nail right on the head because this is all about what's happening to post-secondary education here in Mike Harris's Ontario.

I know the member for Trinity-Spadina. I know his family. I know his 90-year-old mother. She had a grade 1 education back in Italy. His father got to grade 5, not unlike the parents of more than a few people in this assembly and like so many parents of so many children of working-class immigrant families.

The member for Trinity-Spadina understands that he is the first generation in his family who got to go to college and university, just like I am in mine. I know the member's three kids: Stephanie, Vanessa and Michael. My fear for them, knowing those kids, as bright as they are, as capable as they are, is that this government's policies—its defunding of education, its relegation of post-secondary education back to that elite status where it's only for the children of the wealthy—are going to mean that just as the member for Trinity-Spadina and I and so many others were the first generation who, as children of working-class immigrant families got to go to college and university, the young people in today's colleges and universities in Mike Harris's Ontario could well be the last generation who, as but children of working-class and, yes, immigrant families, get to go to college and university. This is the elite Mike Harris's Ontario where only the children of the country club set, the Frank Stronach set, the John Roth set, where only the children of CEOs of the big banks get to proceed to post-secondary education. New Democrats aren't going to tolerate that.

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): I'm certainly interested in the last speaker's comments and also of

course the member for Trinity-Spadina as they talked about being the first generation in their families to go to university. I come from a farm family, and I can say the same thing for myself. At the time I went to university, I can tell you that tuition on a percentage basis was one heck of a lot more than it is today. What better can you invest in than your education? I'm pretty proud of the education I did end up with, but there are many ways of obtaining that.

It was interesting to hear the member for Trinity-Spadina talking about the hard-working people of Ontario. It's so good to hear it coming from that party because when they were in government, they milked the hard-working people of this province with constant tax increases and the end-resulting debt was absolutely terrible. There are just no words that can possibly describe the kind of spending and taxing and borrowing they went through.

He made reference to the enrolment numbers we're facing, the double cohort, but he didn't mention the \$1 billion that's being invested right now in bricks and mortar, in building buildings these students in that double cohort will be able to go to.

1650

He talked about giving away control but he didn't talk about accountability: the accountability of the number of graduates getting employment, the accountability of employer satisfaction, the accountability of graduate satisfaction. He didn't talk about the improved repayment of the OSAP loans that has occurred over the last few years with our government.

We can't forget the kind of investment in the future that these students are putting into their own lives, into their own livelihood. What better could you invest in than your own education and your own future?

The Deputy Speaker: Response, the member for Trinity-Spadina.

Mr Marchese: Thank you, friends and foe alike.

The Ipsos-Reid polling done today said this:

"The results of an Ipsos-Reid poll released today show that two thirds (64%) of Ontarians want increased provincial ... funding for universities and colleges, even though this may result in a cancellation of planned tax cuts or reduced government spending in other areas"—64%. "Increased provincial funding garners the support of voters across all the major political parties who know who they would vote for if an election were held in the province tomorrow. This includes a majority of decided PC voters (53%)."

I urge that 53% of PC voters who believe this, because that's what it says, to call Minister Stockwell. He's my buddy. He's here. He's listening closely to these things.

Mr Kormos: What should they call him?

Mr Marchese: Because he's not convinced. He thinks it's only New Democrats out there who believe this stuff; 53% of PC voters believe that we need increased funding and they're willing to give up the tax cut.

Citizens of Ontario, I've got to tell you something that I neglected to put in my speech earlier on: New Demo-

crats believe that we should get rid of tuition fees. How do we fund it? We fund it from a progressive income tax system. I say tax the people who are good income earners at the end of the educational process, once they get into the work field and not in the beginning. In the beginning you cut off a whole lot of low-income earners from having access to these programs, but in the end you tax them, if you want to get the money back to fund it in a way that's fair. So I'm saying, as a New Democrat, free tuition fees. You've got no problem with access, and if you need the money later on you take it from those high-income earners who have benefited from a free educational system.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre): I am very pleased to rise and address the House in support of this legislation which I believe will make it easier for students to access financial aid and pursue post-secondary education in this province.

I am encouraged by the support of some of my colleagues on the other side who have recognized that harmonizing federal and provincial student loan programs will bring some benefit for students and taxpayers. I accept that some of my colleagues may have concerns in other areas of Ontario's post-secondary education system. I hope that we'll be able to address some of these concerns as we proceed with debate today.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The Minister of Labour isn't in his seat. Stop the clock. If you want to carry conversations across the floor, it's most distracting, so take it outside.

The member for Kitchener-Centre.

Mr Wettlaufer: Thank you, Speaker. I really appreciate your intervention there because I think the Minister of Labour and the member from Niagara Centre and the member from Trinity-Spadina should be paying attention.

Our government's commitment to accessible post-secondary education in Ontario I think was clearly spelled out in our Blueprint, which was the election platform. It was spelled out on page 45. It states, "...every willing and qualified Ontario student will continue to be able to attend college or university."

I know each of you will remember the Blueprint. I'm sure you've all read through it. I know that in my riding every household received one, so my constituents certainly know what it says too.

The legislation we are debating today is an important part of our work to fulfill the promise that was contained in the Blueprint. It does so because it makes it easier for students to access, receive and repay student loans. This makes it a good piece of legislation, but it is only a part of this government's efforts to ensure that university and college education is accessible for all Ontario students.

As my colleagues and I on this side of the House will demonstrate, it is part of a broader effort involving increased public investments, involving greater accountability and involving improved collaboration with educators and private sector partners to ensure accessibility.

I would like to begin by reminding the House of why this agreement is necessary. I'm sure you will all recall that the Ontario government signed an agreement in May 1999 with Ottawa, with the federal government, to move forward with the harmonization of federal and provincial student loan programs. We entered into this agreement to improve services for students, reduce the number of defaults and increase accountability in the administration of student loans. While all provinces outside of Quebec will need to make arrangements for this change, Ontario will be only the second jurisdiction to realize a harmonized loan arrangement with the federal government.

Some members of the Liberal Party have made accusations that our government has not moved quickly enough. I'm happy to point out that Ontario has been a leader in taking advantage of student loan harmonization with the federal government. I repeat: we are the second jurisdiction to come to an agreement with the federal government. Since the agreement was signed, however, the national banks have determined that they are no longer willing to be involved in the delivery of student loans. As a result of that decision, jurisdictions across Canada must establish alternative ways to ensure that students continue to receive the assistance they need in order to pursue their goals in post-secondary education. Clearly, Ontario must do so if we are to ensure that students have the necessary funding to complete their studies.

Last year, more than 170,000 Ontario students received help from the Ontario student assistance program, OSAP. We must ensure that these funds remain available to those who need them. The federal government has passed legislation that gives it the authority to introduce a direct loan program for the Canada student loan portion of student assistance. That program will be delivered by independent service providers under contract to the federal government. There are provisions in the contract for the provinces to use the same service providers.

The legislation we are discussing here today would, if passed by the Legislature, provide the Ontario government with the authority it needs to implement its agreement with the federal government for joint administration of the Canada and Ontario student loan programs. This means better service for students. For example, student loan certificates will be provided through financial aid offices in colleges and universities. As is the case today with Canada student loans, students would be able to take the loan certificates to a student loan kiosk on campus or to a Canada Post outlet. Funds would then be deposited directly to the students' bank accounts. Under our harmonization agreement, students who need help repaying their loans will be eligible for up to 30 months of interest relief, an improvement over the current 18-month period.

Another example of enhanced service is that borrowers will be contacted by the service providers at least twice a year to give them information about repayment or changes to the plan and to allow borrowers to update their information, such as addresses, phone numbers and the like. This is a higher standard of service than is

currently in place for students or for anyone else and will help everyone—students, government and service providers—to improve the efficiency and administration of Ontario student loans.

1700

It deserves mention that this government has put in place a number of student assistance programs that help students in financial need access post-secondary education. For example, we established the Ontario student opportunity trust fund program whereby the province matched contributions from institutions and private partners to establish endowment funds at Ontario post-secondary institutions. Seventeen universities and 25 colleges have already participated in this initiative, and the result has been the creation of permanent trust funds with a total value of \$600 million. These funds will provide assistance for up to 185,000 students over the next 10 years, and more in the years ahead.

Our government introduced annual student grants to reduce student debt. The Ontario student opportunity grant program forgives student loan debt that runs to over \$7,000 per year of study, and unlike the previous government's arrangement, we ensured that these funds are paid to students annually instead of at graduation. Approximately 39,800 students benefited from grants last year in our province. Ontario student opportunity grants are an important part of our government's continuing work to reduce student debt.

In those instances in which institutions have elected to raise tuition fees, our government has insisted that 30% of revenues from increased tuition be dedicated to help students in need. Last year alone, 92,000 Ontario students received assistance from tuition set-asides in the form of bursaries, scholarships, work-study and summer jobs. This initiative alone represents an anticipated \$125.3 million of financial help for students in 2000-01, and it will give institutions the flexibility to meet the particular needs of their students.

The Ontario government also offers scholarships directly to students to recognize excellence and to assist with the cost of post-secondary education. For students leaving secondary school for their first year of study, we have introduced the Aiming for the Top scholarship program. This program recognizes secondary school students with high marks as well as financial need. Winners of Aiming for the Top tuition scholarships can receive up to a maximum of \$3,500 per year toward post-secondary tuition. Students who maintain an 80% average can continue to receive these tuition scholarships for up to four years. To ensure that Aiming for the Top winners receive the full benefit of their scholarships, the government also increased the amount of scholarship money students can earn before their Ontario student assistance program assistance is affected. More than 4,000 scholarships were awarded last fall. When fully implemented, \$35 million annually will be invested in these scholarships to recognize academic excellence and financial need.

Funding for the Ontario work-study plan has been doubled. This will assist twice as many deserving stu-

dents complete their studies. In partnership with institutions, these funds support jobs for students that do not replace existing positions, are situated on or near campus and accommodate students' academic schedules. Ontario is increasing its support for this program, from \$5.4 million to \$10.8 million annually. As a result, the number of students participating in the program will increase from 3,500 to over 7,000 students. Work-study is another example of an innovative partnership that is allowing students to earn money without compromising their studies and to make a positive contribution to their college or university community.

Our government is committed to helping students at all levels of post-secondary study. Through the Ontario graduate scholarships and Ontario graduate scholarships in science and technology, we are encouraging our best students to study in Ontario and pursue the leading-edge research and study that are increasingly important in our province's prosperity.

Ontario graduate scholarships in science and technology assist up to 500 students per year, in addition to the 1,300 students assisted through the Ontario graduate scholarships program. In 2001-02, the number of Ontario graduate scholarships awarded to students annually will increase from 1,300 to 2,000, and their value will increase from approximately \$11,800 to \$15,000 for three terms of study. All of these initiatives increase the amount of money available to students and increase the number of students who will have access to it.

We have also taken steps to enhance operating funding to ensure spaces for students. Our government allocated over \$28 million to help colleges and universities accommodate more students in 2000-01.

Interjections.

Mr Wettlaufer: I hear the comments across the floor from the Liberal benches. They don't think it's enough. We're talking millions upon millions of dollars. Everything that I have discussed here, we're talking millions and millions of dollars, leading up to hundreds of millions of dollars.

Of the \$28 million allocated to the colleges and universities, \$3.75 million went to create 500 new spaces in teacher education and \$1 million went to create an additional 40 spaces in medical schools. We also introduced a \$16.5-million accessibility fund to help post-secondary institutions facing increased demand accommodate students in first-year entry programs.

Again I'm hearing the comments, "It's still not enough." Our government has spent more on post-secondary education than any other government in Ontario's history. This year alone, we increased funding by \$103 million, in one year, to support accessibility and high-quality education for students.

Some members on the other side of the House claim that Ontario colleges and universities are underfunded when compared to other Canadian provinces—

Interjections.

Mr Wettlaufer: Yes, there they go—yet total operating income at Ontario institutions is \$265 more per

student than the average of the other nine provinces. While funding students is important, ensuring that institutions can meet their share of the cost of education is integral to a successful system of post-secondary education. This government is committed to ensuring that there will be sufficient operating funds to complement record levels of student support.

Last Thursday, concerns were raised by the New Democratic benches about tuition increases. I am pleased to address some of those issues.

Our government has announced a five-year tuition fee policy which permits the lowest fee increases since the late 1970s, including during the NDP and Liberal governments. Institutions are limited to a 2% annual increase in tuition over the average from the previous year and cannot compound year-over-year increases. This policy not only keeps tuition increases low but will also allow parents and students to reliably plan for the cost of post-secondary education. I should also point out that under our government's policy, no institution is required to raise tuition.

Our government has taken effective steps to provide adequate support to universities and colleges, while capping tuition increases at a modest and predictable level. Both of these measures are an important part of our plan to keep post-secondary education accessible to Ontario students.

As I said at the outset, the motivation and academic accomplishments of students should be the important factors in determining who can study at college or university. I am encouraged, and I know that most of my colleagues in this House are encouraged, by the increasing numbers of students seeking college or university education as they are the proof that post-secondary education remains accessible.

1710

By passing this bill, we will be making an important decision. We will be taking an important step to further improve accessibility. The legislation we are discussing today will complement the government's plan to ensure that our post-secondary institutions are ready for the 21st century. What we are talking about today is ensuring that students can afford a post-secondary education because these students are the future of this province. They will make up the skilled workforce that this province needs to attract investment and jobs in the future. They also will turn around and create jobs themselves as a result of the education that we provide them.

Our government is committed to ensuring that all willing and qualified students continue to secure a place in our post-secondary system. This legislation would ensure that Ontario students will continue to have access to the student assistance that they require to help manage their portion of the cost of their education.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Mario Sergio (York West): My compliments to the member from the government side—the member for Kitchener Centre—on his wonderful rendition speaking on behalf of the government. The problem is that we

have to deal with the working-class kids who don't have the same chance that the other kids have.

Unfortunately, when the member read from the *Common Sense Revolution* book, whatever page, whatever promise the government made, it was every Ontarian that qualifies. This is the promise: every Ontarian that qualifies. I wonder, how many working-class kids qualify? They do qualify if they have the money, if they have the possibility. So give them the chance, give them the possibility.

I agree with him that every kid should have equal opportunity, equal rights, but you cannot have that when you continuously have—since 1995, since this government took over—crisis, chaos and cuts, and we told you respectfully. I would perhaps be doing the same speech if I was on the government side, but you know since 1995 we have increased the fees for tuition more than 60%. So when they come today and say, "We will propose the lowest increase—an extra 2% on top of the 60%," with all due respect, this would be an affront to the working-class families' kids who can't afford any more tuition to go to post-secondary education. I think it's up to the government to give them that chance to do that. Now we have deregulated the tuition fees which means we are not increasing anything. Oh sure, but by deregulating the fees, you're letting the colleges and universities charge whatever the heck they want, so working-class families can't afford them.

Mr Marchese: Just a couple of things. I think it was the member for Kitchener Centre who talked about the NDP milking working people—I think more or less that expression. Somebody else?

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Business Services): No, nobody over here said it. We didn't say it.

Mr Marchese: But I think you all say that. I just have to tell you, when you increase—

Mr Wettlaufer: I didn't say it, but I wish would have.

Mr Marchese: OK, let's pretend you said it then. Can you imagine increasing tuition fees by 60%? If that's not milking that poor student, what is? A 60% increase, isn't that milking that poor student who's not even working, or in fact is working part-time to make ends meet? You call that not milking the students? I tell you that's the biggest milking job I have ever seen.

But, taxpayers of Ontario and good citizens, my proposal as a New Democrat is that we have free tuition. If you want to equalize the conditions and the opportunities, make university tuition-free, make colleges tuition-free, and then we'll never have to debate about whether the loans we give are sufficient or not sufficient, whether the grants we give to the really poor students are sufficient or not sufficient. I'm arguing to make tuition free.

And if you want to recover the cost, because it's a cost, after they have graduated from being lawyers or doctors or dentists or whatever it is, if they become our teachers, you then have a progressive income tax system that kicks in, and you get it at the end, not in the

beginning. Because if you get it in the beginning, it means you're shutting out a whole lot of people who want to get to university but find the burden of tuition fees too much. That's why we take that position as New Democrats. Let me know—

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): It's a pleasure to join in the debate. My colleague from Kitchener Centre spoke so eloquently. I know the speakers opposite—especially the member from Trinity-Spadina has now spoken for one hour and two minutes. He hasn't said much in the meantime, because he was never to the point.

The debate is about the harmonization of the federal and provincial loan programs. It's such a beautiful program. I know the Liberals are on side with us. I'm sure deep down in their own hearts they are with us because this bill is going to bring in the harmonization. As I said earlier, the banks have pulled out of the arrangement. We have to come up with an arrangement; students have to be looked after, and that is the purpose of this bill.

This bill, if passed, is going to provide students the access: one application, one location where they can go and pick up their money. There is even an arrangement with Canada Post where they can access these funds, even if they don't have access to them right on the campus.

Over and over the question or the concern comes up about the double cohort. Let me reiterate: my own daughter is in that program where she will be graduating and going into university in 2003. The member opposite was quite concerned about the first-generation immigrants, how difficult they might be finding it to send their kids to school. But if you look at the universities' and colleges' composition, the first-generation immigrants are doing all right. Those kids are getting a great education, as are all Ontario kids. The facilities are there, and we are making sure that by investing \$1.8 billion, the double cohort is going to be looked after properly.

Interjection.

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): I'm not going to yell at you. Not quite yet. Wait till my 10 minutes comes, and then I'll do some blasting.

In response to the member from Kitchener Centre, I very much enjoy hearing the member from Trinity-Spadina speak and certainly have enjoyed Mr Wettlaufer's comments today. But I think I'd just like to put on the record some information that has just come out in an Ipsos-Reid poll that was released today. It reads, "Ontarians and Access to Post-Secondary Education. Two thirds (64%) of Ontarians, including a majority of decided PC voters (53%) want increased provincial funding for universities and colleges even if it may mean cancelling tax cuts or reduced spending in other areas.

"Seventy per cent (70%) of parents are concerned their kids won't be able to attend university or college even if they are qualified—main reason: they can't afford it (79%), including decided PC voters (78%)."

Two thirds. I think it's very obvious when you listen to what's come out today that there's a lot of concern about what's happening within our post-secondary institutions. I think it's incumbent on all of us as elected officials that—we've got young pages here who are going to be looking for post-secondary opportunities, and we need to make sure that we do everything possible in order to avail them of that opportunity.

I do applaud the initiative of the government today. I know it's not too often that you stand up and say that you are moving in the right direction. I do support that, but I think there are other things you should be looking at within the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, including the budget.

This is a budget that has seen repeated hits by this government since they took office in 1995. This is only one part of a large jigsaw puzzle, and I think a true commitment to funding would be much more appreciated.

1720

Mr Wettlaufer: I appreciate the comments by the members from York West, Trinity-Spadina, Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale and Elgin-Middlesex-London, but I pay attention to what they say specifically. The member from York West said, "To qualify, they must have the money, and it's up to government to give them a chance." The member from Trinity-Spadina said, "Free tuition is the answer." The member from Elgin-Middlesex-London said, "Affordable tuition is the answer."

What's affordable? What is the Liberal position? Last Thursday, May 3, the member from Eglinton-Lawrence said—

Interjection: He's a Liberal.

Mr Wettlaufer: Yes, he's a Liberal. He said, "Emphatically, we would roll back tuition 10%." Does that mean that the present tuition minus 10% is suddenly affordable? Is that the Liberal position? My, my, my. Rather than just criticize all the time, I wish the Liberals would come up with an actual position. You can't say that present tuition less 10% is necessarily affordable.

What this bill proposes is to give students who are having trouble paying back their loans because of low income or unemployment some assistance. Why is that so necessary? That is because some of the students are not able to get the well-paying jobs and sometimes, just sometimes, there are areas of study that could help them to obtain better-paying jobs at the end. This is something I would encourage students to look at as well, that at the end they know what will produce a well-paying job.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Levac: I appreciate the opportunity to speak to the House this evening about this legislation that's before us. It's Bill 19, An Act to amend the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act. Before the general public gets too excited about what that means, it doesn't mean they're going to fix the problem; it just means they're going to make a little adjustment because the banks aren't going to do what they were going to do.

Let's make sure—before I finish that sentence, I forgot to mention that I'm going to be sharing my time with the member from Elgin-Middlesex-London.

I want to quote from the explanatory note, to make sure that the public understand the very precise language that's being used here. "The bill will allow the Minister of Finance to assign, transfer or sell student loans." And it will "permit the Lieutenant Governor in Council to further prescribe terms of agreements regarding student loans and the assignment, transfer or sale of student loans." It's a pretty open-ended statement that allows them to do pretty well everything they can.

Here's a buzzword for you, contrary to what—some of the people on the other side want to make it sound as if they want to be totally responsible. Listen carefully. It's called privatization. That door is now going to be open, with the language that's being used here. They're going to go to the private sector to possibly give out the money. Is that such a bad idea? Maybe, maybe not, but it's going to have to be for the public to decide what's going to happen as a result of this particular language not covering off how precisely those students are going to have to start paying those loans back.

Further, I want to give a little bit of a backgrounder to make sure people understand what we're getting into. At present there are two government loan programs, the Canada loans and Ontario student loans. The student makes one application to OSAP, which is the Ontario student assistance program. A determination of this funding is based on the student's needs and financial resources.

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities houses the OSAP program and receives the fee from the federal government to assess students' needs and authorize loans under the Canada student loan program.

It is a little bit on the complicated side and therefore I'm going to say this and say it once: the government's got the right idea. They're moving down the road to make sure that it's one-stop shopping. That's supportable.

When a student completes or withdraws from their studies, they must begin to repay their loan. Banks have withdrawn from the federal student loan program and are now withdrawing from the provincial side of that loan program. That's the reason they're in this discussion and that's the reason they're proposing the bill. Forget all of the other stuff that's being talked about. For this particular bill at this particular time, it's to take the place of a program that's not going to be offered by the banks. So they've got to pick up the ball and run with it.

The issue is that the banks are withdrawing and the province needs to find another way to provide loans to students. The Ontario-Canada agreement on the harmonization of the federal and provincial student loans program, which is the short term for the bill, has resulted in an agreement to create a single student loan and streamline loan administration. The proposed legislation is amending the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act and permitting the "Minister of Training,

Colleges and Universities to make direct loans to students of post-secondary institutions to enter into agreements regarding student loan arrangements." The Minister of Finance is able to "assign, transfer or sell student loans" to third parties.

Overall, this is a good and necessary part of the legislation. There is a need to streamline the student loan program. However, let's talk about what the government should be doing. They should be focusing on reducing student debt loads rather than making it easier for students to accrue debt, and in terms of that it simply means that if they were to take the time to make sure student debt load was brought down, then they would not have to worry too much about the indebtedness of that student once they leave university. This legislation does nothing to provide the interest to relieve that student loan at all. Let's not get into this idea of, "We're providing all this money. We're giving everybody all this money. It's all available"—yet you saw that happen to the farmers in the past, where the banks walked up to them and said, "Borrow the money. Borrow the money. Borrow the money." The farmers went into indebtedness that they couldn't cope with any more and all of a sudden the banks started calling them back in again when times got rough.

I'm saying the government should be more responsible, by reducing this debt load for the students, as opposed to just making it easier to grab a lot more money to go into debt.

University tuition fees are 45% higher than they were in 1995-96. University tuition fees now make up 40% of university operating funds, which basically says tuition fees have continued to rise. The member on the other side was mocking a 10% reduction. We're offering something to reduce that debt load and this government is saying, "But it's OK to continue to put that up higher," and then they're saying there's a cap, but it's a cap of 2% that continues rising. It doesn't say anything about reducing that student debt.

It's unfortunate that the government doesn't understand that the people in these polls are trying to tell you, "That's enough. We've had it. Stop, please. You're scaring us. You're making us realize that we're going to start mocking the United States, where people have to start selling their houses in order to send their kids to school." Would you just take the message from your own party members? Fifty-three per cent of your own party members are saying to you very clearly, "Would you please stop it? Would you knock it off, please? Would you please reduce that opportunity for us to go into debt? Would you do us a big favour here? Would you stop the tax cuts just for a moment so that we can catch our breath and make sure our kids can go to school?"

That's what it says in the polls. What are you afraid of? You're afraid of your own party now? Your ideology has driven you to the point where you're not even listening to your own people. The Statistics Canada report shows that there's a growing gap between the participation rates—

Interjection.

Mr Levac: Listen carefully—the participation rates of students of higher-income families and students in lower-income families. This was denied by the minister the other day, when she basically said, “Our people are getting richer.” But the mean is rising, and that means that you have to be richer to send your kids to school. She wants to deny and say that Statistics Canada is wrong. So everybody else is wrong except for this particular minister and these people around here, because 53% of their own people are telling them it’s time to stop this.

The Ipsos-Reid poll has been very clear. It has been outlined a few times today. Two thirds of Ontarians are basically saying to this government, “Put the brakes on, please. Would you please slow down?” They’re not listening.

I want to make sure the member from Kitchener Centre hears this, because he’s the one who brought up skills development. I want to make a few points here for my own constituents. I’m dealing with some of these issues on my own in my riding from people who are stuck with this OSAP problem. The member from Kitchener Centre said something to the effect of, “We’re going to try to make it easier for students who want to do skills development.” Maybe he can explain it to me. Maybe he can work with me to talk to the minister about making a change in a very large problem that’s being created.

Students who want to take what’s called a “quick start” program at Mohawk College in my riding for various skilled trades don’t qualify for OSAP. This is diminishing the ability of those students to enter the skilled trades immediately. Twenty-four weeks after the training they can get into the skills development programs, yet they don’t qualify for assistance from OSAP.

1730

Let’s remove that barrier so that my constituents and many others across the province can enter into a program and get out with skills development, because the businesses that are talking to this government are saying very clearly to you, and they’re saying it loudly, “Get on with developing skilled trades so that those students can come in and we can hire them from Ontario and from Canada.”

A case of mine involved a father who received a retirement gratuity and put it immediately into an RRSP for future years, which is what you’re supposed to do. The government penalized him because, it says, it’s income. So now he doesn’t qualify to assist his child to go to university because that was counted as part of his income and he didn’t qualify for OSAP. So there’s another loophole that needs to be corrected.

The government simply hands down defaulted loans to collection agencies, which constantly harass the people in my riding. That’s the fear I brought up originally, when I said this could be handed over to anybody else. The collection agency route is a very difficult one to go down for students, and for parents who are trying to educate their children.

I appreciate my opportunity here and I’m going to turn it over to the member from Elgin-Middlesex-London.

Mr Peters: I have a few comments to make regarding the piece of legislation that’s in front of us. Earlier, I certainly expressed support for it because it is a step in the right direction. As I said earlier, though, it’s a small step. It’s only one piece of a jigsaw puzzle, a big piece of a puzzle that the Harris government, when it comes to funding our post-secondary institutions, has thrown away. It’s a sad day to see what has transpired within our post-secondary institutions in this province.

I’m proud to have graduated from the University of Western Ontario, and one of the means I had to attend university, because I wasn’t in a financial position to pay for all the costs myself, was to receive an OSAP loan. That loan helped me to get through my education. It not only helped pay my tuition but it helped to pay for the books—

Interjection.

Mr Peters: Yes, it is paid back.

It is a sad day too to see the banks abandoning students in this province and across this country. The banks have a role to play and should have a role to play in providing assistance to students for post-secondary education. But I guess there’s not enough money in it for them and they’ve abandoned it. It is a sad day.

We need to look at some of the damage that has been done, and there is a lot of damage that has been done. To the members, if you want to read an interesting speech, it was delivered on February 26 by Charles Baillie, the chairman and CEO of TD Bank Financial Group. It’s a most interesting speech, but one excerpt of it is telling: “At precisely the time when the ‘knowledge-based’ economy is crying out for better-educated workers—people who can think and solve problems—we have seen a shocking decline in education spending. In the US, government spending on public universities in the last two decades increased 20%. In Canada spending has decreased 30%.”

We’ve seen those spending decreases, we’ve witnessed them right here in our own backyards, and the draconian measures the Harris government has put in, all because of the cost of tax cuts for people. We lose sight of this, that Mike Harris puts it in your pocket in one place but it comes out in another place. That’s something we’ve seen that’s very real with university education in this province: on the one hand, government gives money back to you in tax cuts, but they’re taking it away from you as new employees, and new students are taking it away through increased tuition fees. That’s a sad day.

This is a government that first, in 1992, promised that tuition fees should only be allowed to rise, over a four-year period, to 25% of the operating costs of universities. By 1999 the Blueprint considered that 35% of tuition was reasonable and affordable. But now we’ve seen that estimates indicate that students are contributing over 40% through their tuition and university fees. That is all on the backs and that’s the fault of the Mike Harris government, Mike Harris and the individuals who are sitting here

today on the other side. We've seen a \$400-million cut to post-secondary institutions since his government has taken office—\$280 million from universities and \$120 million from colleges. Mike Harris has cut the funding to the point right now where Ontario is dead last out of 10 provinces in per capita funding for universities, and we have the second-highest tuition rates in Canada, only Nova Scotia being higher.

Right now, as we've seen funding cut, we now rank 59th out of 60 jurisdictions in North America in funding that's provided to post-secondary education. There's only one place that ranks lower than Ontario, and that's the home of the great G.W. Bush, Texas. This government loves to follow the track record of Texas, whether it be funding for post-secondary institutions or pollution.

When you look across North America right now, who's the number one polluter? Texas. Who's right behind? Ontario. This government just seems to love the Lone Star State, and where it says, "Don't mess with Texas," this government says, "Don't mess with Ontario." But I can tell you, Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal Party do care about Ontario. We're concerned about the direction this government is taking people in this province, and it's a sad road this government is going down.

You know, I think we need to look at what some university presidents are saying about this government. On March 14, 2000, Robert Prichard, the president of the University of Toronto at the time, said, "Unless the province makes a serious commitment to new funds, for growth and demands for places, it is inevitable that access will be sacrificed and quality will be eroded." Quality being eroded—that's the message being delivered from the University of Toronto president. It's a message that we're hearing from the institutions—colleges and universities—across this province.

That's 2000, but let's look right up to date, at an initiative that was put forth by this government, the Portals and Pathways: A Review of Postsecondary Education, 2001. It's interesting that one of the most interesting findings, and probably the finding of this report that is going to upset the Tories the most, is the strong recommendation for increased funding in post-secondary education.

Assessing the adequacy of government funding did not fall within the mandate of the task force, yet a significant portion of that report, the very report that this government initiated to look at how they're funding post-secondary education, showed some serious problems in this province. Ontario's post-secondary institutions we know are being cost-effective and innovative, efficient and fiscally responsible. However, they're at a crossroads, and the projected revenue gap that's in place threatens the very survival of Ontario's post-secondary institutions. This is a hodgepodge of some of my stuff, some Liberal research and some of your own Tory Blueprint material too, so it's nice to throw a bit back. Sorry I couldn't find any Hansard to throw back at you today.

We're seeing that tuition fees are making up a larger share of the total institutional revenues today than at any other time during the 1990s. Institutions are aging, and deferred maintenance costs stand at \$900 million in the universities and \$300 million in colleges. We could go on and on. I'm going to read into the record again—I think it's important to hear—that the Ipsos-Reid poll said: "Two thirds (64%) of Ontarians, including a majority of decided PC voters (53%), want increased provincial funding for universities and colleges even if it may mean cancelling tax cuts or reduced spending in other areas."

Just don't reduce in agriculture, because certainly I have very strong sympathy for the Minister of Agriculture and the importance that we need to fund agriculture. Seventy per cent of Ontario parents are concerned, 43% are very concerned, that their kids may not be able to attend university or college, even if they are qualified. That's a sad day.

1740

I just want to take this opportunity to raise a local issue. In my riding of Elgin-Middlesex-London, we had a flight-training school. It was known as St Thomas Aviation Inc; it was a private school. It had an agreement with the provincial government to provide OSAP loans to students. The OSAP loans of the students were assigned to the school. They paid their tuition through OSAP but they didn't receive a diploma. A number of these students didn't receive a diploma because in the fall of 1995 the school closed. They had the seal of approval from the ministry of colleges and training, but the ministry of colleges and training didn't follow through and watch what was going on at this school. My predecessor, Peter North, was dealing with the issue.

Interjection: A good member.

Mr Peters: A very good member and one of the first independents elected in 60 years. Pete dealt with the issue.

One of the first issues after I was elected in June 1999 was—

Interjection: That was a good election.

Mr Peters: That was a good election. That was a really good election, that June 1999 election. But since June 1999, four letters have been written to the ministry trying to help out these students, still unanswered by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. We've been told now to go and get an FOI. These are individuals who, by no fault of their own, witnessed their school close. It was a school endorsed by the ministry. But you know what? The school closed, no fault of their own. This government has sent collection agents after these students to collect those fees back. One student we've been dealing with has had two collection agencies harassing him for seven years.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions or comments?

Mr Kormos: I was listening very carefully to the two members of the Liberal caucus. I happen to like both of those members; I hold them in regard. But I'm amazed that the Liberal caucus stands up and they don't even have 20 minutes' worth of stuff to say on this issue. I

would have thought folks out there would want to hear from the Liberals. So here are two members whom I like a whole lot splitting their time, 10 minutes apiece. Are they going to now accelerate this process? Are they going to support time allocation when the government brings it in? Look, it's one thing to sort of have a little too much and to fall into the Tory bed and end up sleeping with them; it's another thing to crawl in stone-cold sober, fully aware of your bedmate.

I've got folks coming into my constituency office and I'm running into them at Comisso's plaza and up at the Zehrs store. I had a gentleman in, an old friend of mine, a long-time friend; he's in his 80s. Over the course of a hard-working lifetime, he put together \$20,000 or \$30,000 that he's had in the bank and he's been drawing interest on. He said to me, "Peter, look, my grandchildren, I want to help them with their university, because I know their families can't afford it. These kids are going to have to drop out." But I had to have a candid talk with this 80-plus gentleman, who's still in good health but failing strength, about the fact that with his increased property taxes, the increases in natural gas, the increases in electricity, the spikes in electricity costs that Harris and the Tories are going to generate here in the province of Ontario, he may not be able to afford as a senior citizen to express his love for his grandchildren. The fact is that at the end of the day, both of them are going to be screwed: the senior citizen—granddad and grandma—as well as the grandkids.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour): I'd like to meet that guy. But let's talk quickly; I want to get it on the record. The banks are getting out of the business for one reason: they can't collect the loans. If this is a gold mine, they wouldn't be getting out of it. Obviously, they're not collecting the money. Whether that's good, bad or indifferent, that's an absolute. The capitalists out there in the banking industry are not going to give up a gold mine if they were making money in collecting loans. They're obviously not.

The second thing is, 59th out of 60? Table the report. I've asked you to table it for a year. You won't table that report. Do you know why? Because the report is bogus. We know it's bogus.

Laughter.

Hon Mr Stockwell: It is bogus. You won't table it. How many times do I have to ask you to table the report? You keep quoting from it, but nobody can tell me who wrote it. I think Gerard Kennedy wrote it one weekend. The second one is the studies that should be tabled.

I also want to talk about—look, the NDP at least are saying, "Do away with any tuitions." As loopy as they are, OK, they have a position. They're saying, "Abolish all tuitions"—we know that would cost an arm and a leg—in Agenda for People. OK, if you want to try and sing that song again, go ahead. But at least it's a position.

You guys make me laugh, you're such vacillating Liberals. "We are going to reduce tuitions by 10%." They say 60% comes from the school, 40% from the person. You're going to reduce what they pay by 4%, and you're

holding this out as some kind of panacea, some nirvana you've reached that now all of a sudden all these poor working people that you represent, with a 4% reduction in tuition fees, 4% on the total cost of education, are now somehow merrily going to get into schools? Take their position, loopy as it is; they're going to get free education. Your position is just a hair different from ours. Four per cent on a year's tuition means nothing to the people you're speaking about. It makes school no more accessible.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Prince Edward-Hastings.

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): The Minister of Labour is right; there is a major problem facing funding.

Hon Mr Stockwell: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I think if they're going to respond, it has to be at least one of the two who stood up and spoke.

The Deputy Speaker: This is questions and comments.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I'm sorry.

The Deputy Speaker: Thanks for your help. Reset the clock for two minutes.

Mr Parsons: The Minister of Labour is right for once on this. It is a big problem that needs to be addressed. But unfortunately, this government is going in the wrong direction. This bill is fairly innocuous; in fact, we've had far more debate time on it than it merits. It makes it easier for a student to get into debt. That's what it does. But the bigger issue that needs to be addressed is the lack of equity for access to the system. The government has lost touch with the way Ontario lives. For the average working family in Ontario, the costs are now insurmountable. For a student leaving a college or university, it's easy to say the debt is only \$25,000 or \$30,000, but if you're from a family that makes \$20,000 a year, if you're from a family that's on disability allowance, that makes \$10,000 or \$11,000 a year, a debt of \$27,000 is terrifying.

Former Premier of Ontario Bill Davis once said, "It is important that we have quality health care in the province, probably the number one issue, but quality health care comes only if we have a quality education system accessible to everyone. In order to fund quality health care,"—the procedures are getting more expensive—"we need a well-paid workforce. In order to have a well-paid workforce, we need to attract industry. Industry will come to Ontario only if we have a highly skilled workforce." We're going in the other direction. We're losing the ability for people from a working family to go to a post-secondary education.

Most of my experience has been in the college system. It's a long time since I've been involved with universities. But I know at Loyalist College in Belleville, which is typical of all of Ontario, since this government was elected in 1995, their per student funding has gone from \$5,000 to \$3,000 per student. That has put tremendous stress on the system. It has caused this college and other colleges to have to cancel—

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Marchese: I just want to say to the good citizens of Ontario that the New Democrats have a lot to say on this topic and we're going to be debating this issue until we are hoarse and cannot speak any more.

I want to say to my good buddy M. Stockwell—I think you referred to our idea of free tuition as goofy?

Hon Mr Stockwell: Loopy.

Mr Marchese: Loopy, which means wacko, that kind of thing?

Good citizens of Ontario, we happen to think it's a good idea. It's a question of values: what do you believe in? We're not talking to each other here in this assembly. I talk to you, those who are watching this particular political forum, and I'm saying to you it's question of what you value. If you're saying that you don't mind paying \$20,000 for tuition fees for your children every year—

Interjection: God bless?

1750

Mr Marchese: God bless. Exactly. Not every year, but accumulated over a degree program of three or four years, it's \$20,000 or so. If it's not regulated, it's like medicine at \$14,000 a year, \$15,000, depending where you are. That's a lot of money, and I'm saying that a whole lot of young people are never going to make it to university. Do you believe that? If you believe, as I do, that we're shutting out a whole lot of young people because they are saying they can't afford it, then I'm saying to you that as a matter of principle, in terms of things I value, if it's free nobody will be shut out.

So I say to Minister Stockwell, the Minister of Labour, that if you believe, as I do, that it's important that no one is blocked—we say education should be free. How do we get it? Like we get everything else. We pay for our health care system and educational system and social programs out of the taxes that we pay. Now, if you think—

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Response?

Mr Peters: In response to the member for Niagara Centre, I can assure the honourable member that I will not go to the dark side. I don't want to go over there, and I don't agree with what was said about you being loopy either. I think that's wrong. But I think the member makes a very good point about increased costs, because there are lots of families in this province, grandparents, who want to help out their children but, because Mike Harris is putting it into one pocket and taking it out of the other, parents and grandparents can't help their grandchildren, and that's a good point that was raised.

To the member from Etobicoke Centre, you make me laugh too. I think it's good that we can make each other laugh. I truly mean that you've done a lot of damage to post-secondary institutions in this province. The cuts that have been made, the damage—we're not going to see it. By the time these pages get to post-secondary institutions, they're going to see the true extent of the damage that Mike Harris and your cronies have done.

To my colleague from Prince Edward-Hastings, it is a question of equity. I think we've got to ensure that every

individual in this province has access to post-secondary institutions. Look at what has happened just recently at the University of Western Ontario, which has raised its tuition by 40% for medical school. What that is going to do—and I think the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs needs to be concerned about this. There's a study at the University of Western Ontario that's shown that these increased tuition costs are shutting the door to rural individuals. We've all got crises around the province of doctor shortages, but moves like the University of Western Ontario and McMaster and U of T are shutting the door to rural Ontario students attending medical school.

To the member for Trinity-Spadina, it is a question of values. That's what it's all about. I don't agree with the values of this government and the emphasis that they're not putting on students.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Galt: For the few minutes remaining this afternoon, I'd first just like to reflect on some of the comments.

This big concern about the double cohort and what's going to happen down the road—you know, this all started with the men coming back from the Second World War, and there was more than a double cohort going through at that time; it may have been a triple or a quadruple. I can tell you they went through university. There was very little preparation at the universities for that load that went into them and we had a lot of people come through the universities and colleges at that time who had brilliant careers afterwards. You certainly do not necessarily have to have the perfect conditions, because those people proved it many times over.

I'm very pleased to rise and join my colleagues on both sides of the House in support of the legislation that's before us here today, Bill 19, An Act to amend the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act.

The tuition that an average Ontario students pays covers about one third of the actual cost of their education—just one third. The rest comes from the government, academic institutions and other sources. Basically, two thirds comes from their neighbours, from their families, from their relatives, from their friends. They're the ones who are paying the other two thirds.

I believe that it is indeed important for colleges and universities to be accountable to everyone who helps fund their operations: the students, the government and the private donors. Greater accountability helps students because it provides them with information that is needed to make good decisions.

As several members pointed out during second reading debate, students sometimes enter the wrong program or do not receive the benefits they expected when they graduated. By ensuring that colleges and universities publish important information about the performance of their programs and operations, students will have important tools to ensure that they make the best academic decisions for themselves.

For far too long, students have read the description of a program and thought, "Wouldn't that be interesting to study?" and have headed off without having any idea whether there is a career opportunity at the end or not. They get halfway through their course or degree and then find out that the job prospects are almost minimal. But lo and behold, the community college or university is getting all kinds of money to put on these programs that in the end will probably not create a job or give them that kind of opportunity, dashing the hopes they had for the future and their livelihood.

Transparency and accountability are principles that our government enthusiastically supports and has worked to establish across many sectors. Our government has taken several specific steps to improve accountability in the post-secondary sector and I would like to address some of them here today.

Before I get into some of those, I would like to reflect back on last Thursday and the debate we had here on the resolution brought forward by the member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale. It was an accountability act on attendance, and when the vote was taken, only 70% of the Liberals were present. I thought that was just a little disturbing. It was an accountability bill and there were

that many absent; an accountability bill brought forward by a Liberal concerned about attendance, and such poor attendance in the Liberal Party at the time that vote was taken. What they should do is set an example.

Mr O'Toole: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The member, Mr Smitherman, isn't here in the House. Isn't that who you're talking about? He's not here.

The Deputy Speaker: I'm sorry, I didn't hear the member for Durham. Would you repeat what you said?

Mr O'Toole: The member for Northumberland should know that the member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale is not here and he shouldn't be mentioning that in his remarks.

The Deputy Speaker: That's a legitimate point of order. Members cannot mention the absence or attendance of another member at a particular sitting.

Mr Kormos: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I want to understand your ruling. Surely the Speaker didn't mean to suggest that I or one of my colleagues couldn't refer to my presence here.

The Deputy Speaker: I certainly did.

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

The House adjourned at 1800.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneure: Hon / L'hon Hilary M. Weston

Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Gary Carr

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller

Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Agostino, Dominic (L)	Hamilton East / -Est	chief opposition whip / whip en chef de l'opposition
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Waterloo-Wellington	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of the Environment / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre de l'Environnement
Baird, Hon / L'hon John R. (PC)	Nepean-Carleton	Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for children, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre délégué au dossier de l'Enfance, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Richesses naturelles
Bartolucci, Rick (L)	Sudbury	deputy opposition House leader / chef parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition
Beaubien, Marcel (PC)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	
Bisson, Gilles (ND)	Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	
Bountrogianni, Marie (L)	Hamilton Mountain	
Boyer, Claudette (Ind)	Ottawa-Vanier	
Bradley, James J. (L)	St Catharines	
Brown, Michael A. (L)	Algoma-Manitoulin	Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président de la Chambre et Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Bryant, Michael (L)	St Paul's	
Caplan, David (L)	Don Valley East / -Est	deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
Carr, Hon / L'hon Gary (PC)	Oakville	Speaker / Président
Christopherson, David (ND)	Hamilton West / -Ouest	
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Churley, Marilyn (ND)	Toronto-Danforth	chief New Democratic Party whip / whip en chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Clark, Hon / L'hon Brad (PC)	Stoney Creek	Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Cleary, John C. (L)	Stormont-Dundas- Charlottenburgh	
Clement, Hon / L'hon Tony (PC)	Brampton West-Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Coburn, Hon / L'hon Brian (PC)	Ottawa-Orléans	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Colle, Mike (L)	Eglinton-Lawrence	
Conway, Sean G. (L)	Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	
Cordiano, Joseph (L)	York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	
Crozier, Bruce (L)	Essex	
Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne (PC)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Curling, Alvin (L)	Scarborough-Rouge River	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
DeFaria, Carl (PC)	Mississauga East / -Est	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Citizenship / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Affaires civiles
Di Cocco, Caroline (L)	Sarnia-Lambton	
Dombrowsky, Leona (L)	Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington	
Duncan, Dwight (L)	Windsor-St Clair	opposition House leader / chef parlementaire de l'opposition
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / -Nord	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education and government House leader / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre de l'Éducation et leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet (PC)	Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge	Minister of Education, government House leader / ministre de l'Éducation, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Elliott, Hon / L'hon Brenda (PC)	Guelph-Wellington	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
Flaherty, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC)	Whitby-Ajax	Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances
Galt, Doug (PC)	Northumberland	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Gerretsen, John (L)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	
Gilchrist, Steve (PC)	Scarborough East / -Est	
Gill, Raminder (PC)	Bramalea-Gore- Malton-Springdale	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Gravelle, Michael (L)	Thunder Bay-Superior North / -Nord	
Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)	Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean	
Hampton, Howard (ND)	Kenora-Rainy River	Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Parliamentary assistant to the Deputy Premier and Minister of Finance / adjoint parlementaire au vice-premier ministre et ministre des Finances
Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D. (PC)	Nipissing	Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif
Hastings, John (PC)	Etobicoke North / -Nord	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de l'Énergie, des Sciences et de la Technologie
Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC)	Haliburton-Victoria-Brock	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Hoy, Pat (L)	Chatham-Kent Essex	
Hudak, Hon / L'hon Tim (PC)	Erie-Lincoln	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation / ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et des Loisirs
Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron (PC)	Burlington	Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Affaires civiles, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Johns, Hon / L'hon Helen (PC)	Huron-Bruce	Minister without Portfolio (Health and Long-Term Care) / ministre sans portefeuille (Santé et Soins de longue durée)
Johnson, Bert (PC)	Perth-Middlesex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Kells, Morley (PC)	Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Kennedy, Gerard (L)	Parkdale-High Park	
Klees, Hon / L'hon Frank (PC)	Oak Ridges	Minister without Portfolio, chief government whip, deputy government House leader / ministre sans portefeuille, whip en chef du gouvernement, leader parlementaire adjoint

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Kormos, Peter (ND)	Niagara Centre / -Centre	New Democratic Party House leader / chef parlementaire du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Kwinter, Monte (L)	York Centre / -Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	
Lankin, Frances (ND)	Beaches-East York	
Levac, Dave (L)	Brant	
Marchese, Rosario (ND)	Trinity-Spadina	
Marland, Margaret (PC)	Mississauga South / -Sud	
Martel, Shelley (ND)	Nickel Belt	
Martin, Tony (ND)	Sault Ste Marie	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
Maves, Bart (PC)	Niagara Falls	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mazzilli, Frank (PC)	London-Fanshawe	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et des Loisirs
McGuinty, Dalton (L)	Ottawa South / -Sud	Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition
McLeod, Lyn (L)	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	
McMeekin, Ted (L)	Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough- Aldershot	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound-Muskoka	
Molinari, Tina R. (PC)	Thornhill	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services and Minister responsible for Children / adjointe parlementaire au ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires et ministre délégué au dossier de l'Enfance
Munro, Julia (PC)	York North / -Nord	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation / adjointe parlementaire au ministre des Transports
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Travail
Mushinski, Marilyn (PC)	Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Parliamentary assistant to the Premier / adjointe parlementaire au premier ministre
Newman, Hon / L'hon Dan (PC)	Scarborough Southwest / -Sud-Ouest	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
O'Toole, John R. (PC)	Durham	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Finances
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Parsons, Ernie (L)	Prince Edward-Hastings	
Patten, Richard (L)	Ottawa Centre / -Centre	
Peters, Steve (L)	Elgin-Middlesex-London	
Phillips, Gerry (L)	Scarborough-Agincourt	
Pupatello, Sandra (L)	Windsor West / -Ouest	
Ramsay, David (L)	Timiskaming-Cochrane	
Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W. (PC)	Leeds-Grenville	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Davenport	
Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob (PC)	Mississauga Centre / -Centre	Minister of Correctional Services / ministre des Services correctionnels
Sergio, Mario (L)	York West / -Ouest	deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
Smitherman, George (L)	Toronto Centre-Rosedale / Toronto-Centre-Rosedale	
Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John (PC)	Mississauga West / -Ouest	Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Spina, Joseph (PC)	Brampton Centre / -Centre	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Consumer and Business Services / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises
Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W. (PC)	Lanark-Carleton	Minister of Consumer and Business Services / ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises
Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Peterborough	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / -Centre	Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)	Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford	Parliamentary assistant to the Solicitor General / adjoint parlementaire au solliciteur général
Tilson, David (PC)	Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey	Parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General and minister responsible for native affairs / adjoint parlementaire au procureur général et ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H. (PC)	Markham	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
Turnbull, Hon / L'hon David (PC)	Don Valley West / -Ouest	Solicitor General / solliciteur général
Wettlaufer, Wayne (PC)	Kitchener Centre / -Centre	Parliamentary assistant to the Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / adjoint parlementaire au président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC)	Simcoe-Grey	Minister of Energy, Science and Technology / ministre de l'Énergie, des Sciences et de la Technologie
Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener-Waterloo	Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement
Wood, Bob (PC)	London West / -Ouest	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Correctional Services / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Services correctionnels
Young, Hon / L'hon David (PC)	Willowdale	Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Vacant	Vaughan-King-Aurora	

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Estimates / Budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Gerard Kennedy
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Alvin Curling
Gilles Bisson, Alvin Curling,
Gerard Kennedy, Frank Mazzilli,
Norm Miller, John R. O'Toole,
Steve Peters, Wayne Wettlaufer
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

**Finance and economic affairs /
Finances et affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Marcel Beaubien
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Doug Galt
Marcel Beaubien, David Christopherson,
Doug Galt, Ernie Hardeman, Monte Kwinter,
John O'Toole, Gerry Phillips, Joseph Spina
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

General government / Affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Président: Steve Gilchrist
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Vacant
Marie Bountrogianni, Ted Chudleigh,
Garfield Dunlop, Steve Gilchrist, Dave Levac,
Rosario Marchese, Norm Miller, Marilyn Mushinski
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Président: James J. Bradley
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Bruce Crozier
James J. Bradley, Bruce Crozier,
Leona Dombrowsky, Bert Johnson,
Morley Kells, Tony Martin,
Jerry J. Ouellette, Bob Wood
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

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

Justice and Social Policy / Justice et affaires sociales

Chair / Présidente: Vacant
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Carl DeFaria
Toby Barrett, Marcel Beaubien,
Michael Bryant, Carl DeFaria,
Garry J. Guzzo, Peter Kormos,
Lyn McLeod, Tina R. Molinari
Clerk / Greffier: Tom Prins

Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative

Chair / Président: R. Gary Stewart
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vacant
Ted Arnott, Marilyn Churley,
Caroline Di Cocco, Jean-Marc Lalonde,
Margaret Marland, Jerry J. Ouellette,
R. Gary Stewart, Joseph N. Tascona,
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

Public accounts / Comptes publics

Chair / Président: John Gerretsen
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: John C. Cleary
John C. Cleary, John Gerretsen, Raminder Gill,
John Hastings, Shelley Martel, Bart Maves,
Julia Munro, Richard Patten
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Regulations and private bills /
Règlements et des projets de loi d'internet privé**

Chair / Présidente: Frances Lankin
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Garfield Dunlop
Gilles Bisson, Garfield Dunlop,
Raminder Gill, Pat Hoy, Frances Lankin,
Frank Mazzilli, Ted McMeekin, Bill Murdoch
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

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

Continued from overleaf

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Lundi 7 mai 2001

PREMIÈRE LECTURE

Loi de 2001 modifiant la Loi sur les obligations familiales et l'exécution des arriérés d'aliments, projet de loi 40, <i>M. Wettlaufer</i> Adoptée	464
Loi de 2001 modifiant la Loi sur les garderies, projet de loi 41, <i>M. Lalonde</i> Adoptée	464
Loi de 2001 sur la préservation, la protection et la promotion de la moraine d'Oak Ridges, projet de loi 42, <i>M. Colle</i> Adoptée	464

DEUXIÈME LECTURE

Loi de 2001 sur l'harmonisation des prêts d'études de l'Ontario, projet de loi 19, <i>M^{me} Cunningham</i> Débat présumé ajourné	501
--	-----

CONTENTS

Monday 7 May 2001

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Rural health services	
Mr Conway	461
Correctional facilities	
Mr Dunlop	461
Education funding	
Mr Gravelle.....	461
Education Week	
Mr O'Toole.....	462
Hospital restructuring	
Ms Di Cocco.....	462
Labour policy	
Mr Kormos	462
Emergency Preparedness Week	
Mr Mazzilli	463
Doctor shortage	
Mrs McLeod	463
Academic testing	
Mr Arnott.....	463

FIRST READINGS

Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Amendment Act, 2001, Bill 40, Mr Wettlaufer	
Agreed to	464
Mr Wettlaufer	464
Day Nurseries Amendment Act, 2001, Bill 41, Mr Lalonde	
Agreed to	464
Mr Lalonde	464
Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation, Protection and Promotion Act, 2001, Bill 42, Mr Colle	
Agreed to	464
Mr Colle.....	464

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

Rural economic development	
Mr Coburn	465
Mr Peters.....	468
Mr Hampton	468
Tourism and trade	
Mr Hudak.....	466
Northern economy	
Mr Newman.....	466
Mr Hampton	469
Research and development	
Mr Wilson.....	467
Mr Phillips	468
Mr Patten	468

ORAL QUESTIONS

Tuition fees	
Mr McGuinty	469
Mrs Cunningham.....	469, 475
Mr Marchese	475
Northern Ontario heritage fund	
Mr McGuinty	470
Mr Newman	471
Water quality	
Mr Hampton	471
Mrs Witmer	471, 472, 476
Ms Churley.....	472
Mr Bradley	476
Competitive electricity market	
Mr Hampton	472
Mr Wilson	472, 474
Mr Conway.....	474
Education legislation	
Mr McGuinty	473
Mrs Ecker	473
Condominium legislation	
Mr Hastings.....	473
Mr Sterling	473
Education funding	
Mr Arnott	475
Mrs Ecker	475
Transportation study	
Mr Maves	477
Mr Clark	477
Post-secondary education	
Mr Gerretsen	477
Mrs Cunningham.....	477
Emergency Preparedness Week	
Mr Galt	478
Mr Turnbull.....	478
Police complaints	
Mr Kormos	478
Mr Young	478

PETITIONS

Northern health travel grant	
Mr Bartolucci	479
Child care	
Ms Martel	479
Horse riding safety	
Mrs Molinari	480
Services for the developmentally disabled	
Ms Di Cocco	480
Brain tumours	
Mr Wood	480
Health care	
Mr Levac	480

Protection of minors

Mr Gill	480
Environmental protection	
Mr Parsons	481
Water quality	
Mr O'Toole.....	481
Safe streets legislation	
Mr Lalonde	481
Immigration and refugee policy	
Mr Hastings	481
Domestic violence	
Ms Churley	482
Poverty	
Mr Sergio.....	482

SECOND READINGS

Ontario Student Loan Harmonization Act, 2001, Bill 19, Mrs Cunningham	
Mr Marchese.....	482, 491, 494, 499
Mr O'Toole.....	490
Mr Levac.....	491, 495
Mr Kormos	491, 498
Mr Galt	491, 500
Mr Wettlaufer	492, 495
Mr Sergio.....	494
Mr Gill	495
Mr Peters.....	495, 497, 500
Mr Stockwell	499
Mr Parsons	499
Debate deemed adjourned.....	501

OTHER BUSINESS

Wearing of pins	
Mr Levac.....	461
Visitor	
The Speaker	464
Hockey game	
Mr Colle.....	469
Legislative pages	
The Speaker	479

Continued overleaf