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**Official Report
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**Journal
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Monday 21 October 2002

Lundi 21 octobre 2002

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Monday 21 October 2002

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 21 octobre 2002

The House met at 1845.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002 SUR
L'EFFICIENCE DU GOUVERNEMENT

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 16, 2002, on the motion for second reading of Bill 179, An Act to promote government efficiency and to improve services to taxpayers by amending or repealing certain Acts and by enacting one new Act / Projet de loi 179, Loi visant à favoriser l'efficacité du gouvernement et à améliorer les services aux contribuables en modifiant ou en abrogeant certaines lois et en édictant une nouvelle loi.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr David Christopherson): It's my understanding that this evening we have to start with the deferred leadoff debate of the official opposition. Therefore, the member for Sarnia-Lambton may now take the floor.

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): I'll be sharing my lead with the member from Windsor West.

First of all, it's with some pleasure that I rise to speak on Bill 179. It's a massive omnibus bill. When I get a bill, most of the time I go through the explanatory note at the beginning to get a sense and gist of what the bill is about. One of the things I noticed when I was going through the explanatory note of this bill is that it impacts 15 ministries and involves over 100 pieces of legislation.

We understand that oftentimes bills have to deal with housekeeping items. That's the nature of most of the omnibus bills that had been presented to the House by past governments, but what I was looking for was to see if there were any substantive issues that were covered. It is those substantive issues that I found some issue with. The most controversial part of that bill is an amendment to the Independent Health Facilities Act.

I want to speak today on this bill dealing with some of these substantive changes. In my view, they're also small erosions that deal with transparency. It's important that we speak to these matters because it appears the government seems to have a style of bringing in large bills that are not omnibus but a bit ominous when it comes to our democratic transparency, or transparency that's needed in democratic government.

I want to talk first about the amendment to the Independent Health Facilities Act, and my colleague will speak to that at length as well. This bill removes the cap on the price an independent health facility owner can offer for the sale of an IHF licence. It's a little bit complicated, but the reason this licence cap was put on was to prevent a market developing around the licensed nature of a facility. Why is that important? The removal of the cap would create a for-profit bias since IHF operators wishing to transfer their licences would have the opportunity to sell to the highest bidders. It moves Ontario, in my view, closer to a two-tier health care system. That's very subtle in this bill; nonetheless it's here.

There are certain sections in the bill that pertain to the Ministry of Finance. In particular, the bill amends both the Securities Act and the Commodity Futures Act.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): On a point of order, Speaker: I don't believe there's a quorum.

The Deputy Speaker: Would the clerk please check for a quorum?

Deputy Clerk (Ms Deborah Deller): A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker ordered the bells rung.

Deputy Clerk: Quorum is now present.

The Deputy Speaker: Quorum now being present, the member for Sarnia-Lambton may now continue.

1850

Ms Di Cocco: Again, I want to deal with the two aspects in this bill that I believe are substantive issues that should be debated: the amendment to the Independent Health Facilities Act and also to the Ministry of Finance.

I would like to speak to the Ministry of Finance—I believe that's where I was at when quorum was called. What it does is it amends the Securities Act and the Commodity Futures Act to allow the minister to directly appoint members of the Financial Disclosure Advisory Board and the Commodity Futures Advisory Board. What does this mean? It means that the government agencies committee of the Legislature will no longer scrutinize government appointees to those boards. So the bill is going to create a new level of exemption from the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act for the Ontario Securities Commission. I believe that one of the reasons we have legislation is the ongoing change that we require to achieve what I call good government. But any time we remove transparency, any time we remove sections that are under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, in my view, it lessens our democracy in this province. When I went through this, I

was quite surprised to see what this has to do with the public good. In my opinion it has nothing to do with the public good.

There is an area as well that is extremely important under the Ministry of Finance amendments because it keeps the door shut to the public. It is not the way government should do business. Open-door policy is what should be the norm, not the exception. Bill 179 makes specific amendments to the Securities Act and the Commodity Futures Act that will keep important information out of the hands of the public and will remove legislative oversight of certain government appointments. That must not happen. Those are areas that should be removed from this bill because it's not just about housekeeping; it's changing legislation.

The Securities Act is amended to add a new level of exemption from FOI from the Ontario Securities Commission. According to the amendment, in addition to other exemptions, the Ontario Securities Commission will not be required to disclose any information that they receive from "any person or entity other than an employee of the commission who provides services to the commission."

I believe, and more appropriately the Ontario Liberals believe, that more transparency in government is required. I brought forward a bill dealing with transparency and providing penalties when public bodies go in camera to make decisions inappropriately. The government members at first voted for it. It went to second reading, went to committee, then it was not reported back to the House because the reality is that we can talk about accountability, but it is another thing to actually act and do something that would require a different level of accountability: actions to accountability.

So the actions, to me, in this part of the bill show that we really are keeping the door shut to the public. There is, in my view, a lack of transparency. We slowly seem to be eroding little parts of what I call the democratic process as we move forward with these huge bills. We'll just have a little section that erodes a little bit of transparency; we'll have sections that add Henry VIII clauses, which we've seen in the past.

For the members who don't know what Henry VIII clauses are, they are traditionally regarded in parliamentary democracies as undesirable because they empower the cabinet to pass regulations behind closed doors which override statutes passed by the democratically elected Legislature. We've seen that happen, as you know, with the \$10-million tax credit that was provided to our sports teams.

So again we have another example whereby the government's actions speak contrary to their words when they talk about accountability and transparency, because in actual fact we have a number of examples in this omnibus bill that remove the transparency that is there when it comes to appointments that the government will make.

There's a section in here that deals with the heritage act as well. I have to say that Minister Tsubouchi's staff

and the ministry were kind enough to give me a briefing on that section of the bill. I certainly appreciate it, because it's the first time—how can I say it?—that it was brought forward to me if I wanted a briefing. A number of times I have actually called for briefings with some other ministers and it was, "Well, why do you want a briefing on what's coming forward in legislation?" So I do appreciate that it was provided to me.

In some of the sections that have been changed with regard to culture and heritage, there are some good changes that clean up, I would say, definitions. There are about 25 minor amendments made to the existing Ontario Heritage Act.

But I want to take this opportunity to make it understood that I believe that one of the areas in which this province really has been lax in action is that what we need in Ontario is more than these minor amendments. I believe the minister understands this. What we need is a new Ontario Heritage Act. Why? Because the Ontario Heritage Act that we have now is, I believe, about 25 or 26 years old at the very least, and the act that we have today is a narrow, outdated view of heritage. The act that we have in place today is out of step with trends away from separate approaches to heritage conservation and toward integration with mainstream planning processes. The act requires some teeth to actually protect heritage. Right now, all we have is a reprieve. Nothing in this province is sacred from a bulldozer, is sacred from a wrecking ball, if the owner chooses that it should be demolished. We need a comprehensive vision and a definition of heritage. We need a mandate for the province to protect the provincial interest in heritage conservation and to provide some policy direction. We have had none of that.

We've had these small Band-Aids, if you want to call them that, things that were sort of tweaked here and there. I really wish we had the political courage to deal with heritage in a substantive way, because heritage is about who we are as a people.

1900

As you know, one of the biggest issues that has been coming forward in the last little while has to do with Upper Canada's first Parliament. Here we have the foundation of the political history in Ontario and we are very likely going to see it paved over. There is going to be very little to designate where Upper Canada's first Parliament was. If we had a heritage act that would protect and give value to these historic sites or historic buildings, we would be able to evolve over time a sense of who we are as a people and what our history is. We would possibly be able to have a place we could visit and say, "Gee, this is where our government began. This is where our sense of democracy began." We could have an interactive site that would teach a generation about our history. If we keep losing our heritage sites in this province, we will continue to have a lost sense of identity. Why is that important? Because that's who we are as a people; that's how we've grown; that's we've evolved. It's an expression of our values.

I say this because it's one of the first times that I have seen some work, if you want, done with regard to the words "heritage" and "culture." One of the things I've learned since I've been at Queen's Park is that these two words seem not to be in the vocabulary here.

I listened to a minister of culture from another country talking about their sense of value when it comes to culture and heritage. I can tell you that when they talk about what their competitive edge is, they talk about culture and their heritage as giving them that edge. That gives them the ability to compete with a uniqueness that always leads back to who they are as a people, that leads back to the innovation that is developed through their sense of culture, through their sense of the arts, to their value in this sector, which we don't seem to have in this province.

The Deputy Speaker: I'm sorry to interrupt. Could you take a seat for a second. I can appreciate that nobody's trying to interject; it's just that the voices of the people who are talking are a little loud. It's a little hard to hear the member and I know you'd want to show her that respect. If you could keep the voices down, that would really help a lot.

Sorry for the interruption, member for Sarnia-Lambton.

Ms Di Cocco: I want to say that in the section that deals with culture and heritage, I would have liked to see, at some time during the time of this government, something brought forth that would be substantive in this area. Unfortunately, what is substantive in this bill has to do with taking transparency out of how we do business here. But what is not substantive should be an area that should be substantive, which is, in my opinion, something that has not been done and there is no will to do it.

Our heritage should be recognized. It's about the legacies. It's about the tradition and history that gives us a sense of belonging and pride in the place in which we live. How do we quantify that? What role does government have when it comes to protecting and to evolving over time a sense of heritage? Each time we bulldoze something over or we take a wrecking ball to it, we lose an immeasurable and irreparable part of our heritage. We don't get it back.

Just for the members, I was speaking to the person in charge of culture for the city of Rome and I asked them, "What is the timeline that you have before you begin to designate something of heritage value?" I thought—I don't know—maybe a few hundred years. Instead, what surprised me is that in Rome they look at structure after 50 years. Fifty years is the timeline they have before they begin to look at some type of structure as having heritage value. That means there is an understanding, that the political world there has an understanding of what heritage means to a society. It also has economic value, because as you create your sense of identity, the place is interesting to go to. It is interesting to go to a place where you can visibly see what the sense of legacy is, what that sense of history is, just by looking at its buildings.

We know that economic development and taxes can be attained by all of these developers who build incredible

high-rises and have all of these apartment buildings, but long term, what do we leave for generations to come? I believe that we're entrusted, as a society, to leave for our generations to come a sense of who we were, a sense of what our past was. Unfortunately, we don't seem to have the political will to even go down that road in any sense of the word.

We have been here since September 23, and I had hoped we would see some real, substantive legislation before us that shows there's a vision for this province. Unfortunately, we still have a bit of a blank page.

Again, we have an omnibus bill here, the most substantive part of which deals with taking away, out of the purview of the public, appointments that are to be made to the securities commission. I believe that is dangerous because it continues to hide from the public what the public has a right to know.

These amendments, by the way, mean that the appointments to those important boards will no longer receive the scrutiny of the government agencies committee of the Legislature. We believe, and I would hope all the members in this House believe, that the legislative process for public appointments should be respected. Unfortunately, here we are. We have a number of these sections taking that process away.

The government has a responsibility to make their decisions open to public scrutiny. That, to me, is fundamentally what keeps everyone honest, because the public scrutiny means that everything is an open book; we sit here and we discuss these things openly, and we have to defend them. We're not here for any reason except the public good. That's why we are here to make decisions. That's why we're here to clean up the bills that need to be cleaned up with the omnibus bill, not to hide things from the public. Instead, what happens? This government appears to continuously try to circumvent the rules. They circumvent the rules by doing little things, by putting little sections in an omnibus bill that's supposed to be just housekeeping. They do that, and what does it do? It's another little area now that doesn't have, again, transparency.

They've done this to Ontario Hydro in the past. I can give you all of the examples that they've used, these Henry VIII clauses, how many bills. You know how they circumvent what I call the democratic process? For instance, in Bill 62, what it states is that in the event of a conflict between a regulation made under this act and a provision of this act or any other act, or a regulation made under another act, the regulation made under the act prevails. What does that mean? If there is some kind of contrast between the legislation that was brought before Parliament and the regulation that's done behind closed doors, they suggest that that regulation—and that's how they circumvent the democratic process—prevails under the act, not the legislation.

1910

They have done this over and over again since 1995. When I did the research on this, I was really quite appalled, because it was a subversive way, in my opin-

ion, that dealt with eroding our democracy. That is fundamentally what I believe is in error, and this does not serve the public interest. That is the reason that I find I object. I will definitely vote against this omnibus bill because of these two sections that continuously erode the transparency of how government should do its business.

Again, I have to tell you that I and Leona Dombrowsky sat here late one evening, looking through this explanatory note. The two of us thought, "This can't be happening again." It's happening under our noses and probably used in this form because it's easy to miss. I believe the idea is that it's so onerous, who is ever going to look at this stuff? We have so many papers and we have so much that we have to deal with that we'll miss this stuff. But we sat here and we looked at every section in the explanatory note, and it's right there in black and white. I think the members of the government should take a good look at it too, because it does erode transparency and the public's right to know.

Any time we do that, we should stand up in this House and say, "This is not about better government," because any time a bill comes forward, it should be about better government. It should be about legislation that's going to improve things in this province. I believe the Conservatives, the Liberals and the NDP come at things in different ways, but hopefully with the same intent about the public good, not about control, more power, more behind closed doors, because any time we do that, we do a disservice to ourselves and to this province. I can tell you that I will continue to take the time to go through the explanatory notes of these bills and see for myself each time where and when we continuously erode the democratic process by taking out sections that would be under the view of the public. I feel very strongly about this, because good government is transparent. Democracy is about the public's right to know so they can make a decision with the facts before them.

I'm going to finish by saying that I do feel that in this House we have an obligation to scrutinize the legislation that is before us and to applaud and give credit to the aspects of the bill that are good for the public, but also, more importantly, to scrutinize the sections of any legislation that, in my opinion, erode transparency in the job of doing government business. As we move forward in a very complex time where we're constantly inundated with information overload, it's very easy for government to pass things very quietly through. That is fundamentally against the principle of good democracy. That is the reason why I am going to vote against this bill and why the Ontario Liberals will be voting against this bill.

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): I'm happy to continue the discussion along with my colleague from Sarnia-Lambton, Caroline Di Cocco, who has made a career during her time both in local politics in Sarnia as well as here at Queen's Park of speaking to transparency of government. So it's very appropriate that she should lead our discussion this evening on this Government Efficiency Act.

Bill 179 is an enormous bill—an omnibus bill, as was mentioned earlier. While my party took a significant amount of time to walk through the bill, what we realized was that the bill we'll be discussing here—and apparently one of the reasons why we were brought back into this House for this session is this bill. I looked at this bill with an eye to seeing how my constituents of Windsor West were going to be benefiting from this bill. When we speak about issues that matter at home, in our home ridings—does Bill 179 do anything to assist my constituents? The answer has to be no.

Let me tell you that what I'd like to discuss this evening are things that I wish had been in a Government Efficiency Act. I would like to see that we are going to become efficient in training foreign-trained physicians. I would like to see a licence system outlined here that would take care of the many people who don't have a family doctor in Ontario, but that is not in Bill 179.

I wanted to look through this bill to see what in this efficiency act was going to deal with the Family Responsibility Office. There are tens of thousands of people affected every day by the bungling and bureaucracy around family responsibility; there is nothing in Bill 179 that does that for people in my riding or anywhere else in Ontario.

I wanted to speak about legal aid and the number of people who are caught up in a system that is supposed to help them but in fact is not helping them. That is nowhere in Bill 179 as part of this efficiency act.

The Ontario disability support program: with the number of people we face every day across Ontario who can't get into the system or when they're in the system, it's not working for them—that is not in this efficiency act, and it should be.

So I start by asking the government a question: why did we get called back into this House, into session? What is the purpose of this government, under their new leader, Ernie Eves? We have yet to see the reason for Ernie Eves running for leader of his Progressive Conservative Party. We certainly don't see the reason why we were called back into this House. All of us spent those months in our home ridings affirming why the government of Ontario must do the things they do, only to come here and see that the government isn't moving anywhere near to solving real problems for real people at home in our ridings.

My colleague mentioned the changes being made in Bill 179 to the Independent Health Facilities Act, and I wanted to address that as the health critic for my party. I can tell you that it's quite interesting that in the spring and through the summer, we had very interesting announcements by Tony Clement, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, in discussing private MRI clinics, that they would make these proposals and various requests for proposals available to members of the private sector to bid on hosting these private MRIs. When this happened, we came out immediately and strongly and said no. When the minister was questioned, he repeatedly said, yes, individuals would be able to pay for the

service. We know that every experience in the nation has meant that these people who pay for an MRI service will jump the queue ahead of others who are waiting and who are not in a position to pay. So when we saw Bill 179 and realized that they were making this change to the Independent Health Facilities Act, we wondered why. Because this hurtles the government closer to the introduction of a full-fledged two-tier medical system in Ontario, and this is one more building block that this government needs to make that happen.

1920

In 1989, when a then Liberal government brought in this act dealing with independent health facilities to begin with, it was because it was an absolute jungle out there. There was no regulation around these independent health facilities and there was no way to control what was happening out there in the marketplace with health services brought to you by the private sector.

So when the act was brought in they introduced a cap on the value of the licence for the independent health facility. The purpose was so that it would not become a commodity like other commodities on the market, but that it would be restricted, so when it was sold or the licence was moved to someone else, it would have a value that was a reasonable value that would not benefit just the private sector but would be allowable to be held by the non-profits and the privates alike. All three parties realize that the private sector is involved in the health system. The parties certainly differ on the degree and who should be currying favour in the delivery of the health system.

Bill 179, the Government Efficiency Act, actually moves to remove the cap on independent health facilities. What that means is, it's a free market out there. When that licence wants to be had by whoever, it will absolutely benefit the private sector and, in particular, large corporations with very deep pockets who are in a much better position to pay what the market will bear for this licence. That means that if the Sisters of St Mary or St Joseph wanted to try and access this licence to provide a service affiliated with the local hospital, they simply won't have the wherewithal or the deep pockets to purchase the licence because there will be some huge conglomerate, international company, that can swoop in and pay whatever. That will drive the price of the licence up and those non-profits will be excluded from participating in the delivery of that health service. That's just wrong.

There are a number of things the government has done through regulation and otherwise that have changed the face of delivering health service in Ontario since 1995. Another very good example is the change in the building of long-term-care facilities. By regulation, and very quietly, this government changed how you can apply for these beds. What they did at the time was say that if you are applying for them you have to show that you already own the land, that you already have title to the land, that you already have access to appropriate zoning. It seemed like some kind of inconsequential regulation change, but

the reality is that non-profits out there do not have the wherewithal, the deep pockets to get out there to purchase land or lease land, do all of the development, rezoning required and the cost of that, before they even have the security of knowing they've won the bid to build the beds.

That knocks out a whole raft of non-profit organizations that could well have been in there providing long-term-care residents with long-term care—a small regulation change that wholly benefits and makes it much easier for the private sector to participate, to the exclusion of the non-profit sector.

Here we have yet one more example in lifting the cap on the value of a licence for an independent health facility. It's that simple. This is put in to specifically allow the two-tier delivery of this particular kind of health service, and that's just wrong. It's something that we are fighting against and we will continue to fight against and continue to tell the people of Ontario that we cannot allow the benefit of the private sector to the exclusion of non-profit.

Imagine what can happen when these conglomerates or international firms come in with very deep pockets to purchase up the licences: eventually, and it can happen, as we saw a change in the home care sector with private companies, international large companies coming in to win the bids to provide home care delivery. When they own all the licences in this case, in independent health facilities, there you have the monopoly, owned by the private sector, owned specifically by multinationals and then they will be holding the government to ransom as far as what they insist that they be paid for their services. The government cannot allow itself to be in a position not to control what is happening in how our health services are delivered in Ontario. I will be voting against this bill just on that element alone.

There are a number of other changes that this bill seeks to make, and one of them that's more interesting, I suppose, is the exclusion of freedom of information requests to sectors under the Ontario government. Specifically the Guarantee Companies Securities Act is amended to add a new level of exemption from freedom of information for the Ontario Securities Commission. I have to ask the cabinet present: why are you worried about what the public may see in freedom of information? I ask the new Minister of Tourism, are you worried about what the public may see in freedom of information when that becomes public? Why would you take the time to further exempt other arms of government business so that the people can't see? It's a very telling tale of what you're selecting to do.

There's another element in here where you're actually moving to exclude the appointments of individuals from having to go through the process of a government committee for agencies, boards and commissions and the people that you select to put forward as names to be appointed to various boards. Bill 179 will amend the Securities Act and the Commodity Futures Act so that appointments to the Financial Disclosure Advisory Board

and the Commodity Futures Advisory Board are now direct ministerial appointments rather than Lieutenant Governor appointments. What that means—the people of Windsor West will want to know—is that when names come forward, all of us have an opportunity to see whose name is being put forward. All of us on committee for that group have a chance to call these individuals before the committee to find out, what's the Tory link to this appointment?

My colleague from Windsor-St Clair brought a huge raft of names forward: more than half of the failed Tory candidates in the last election are now happy at the Eves trough with government appointments. But as was heard today during question period, when the minister stood up and spoke about government appointments, he said, "Well, it was passed by the committee." Of course they are passed by the committee: it's a majority Conservative committee. So of course the lackeys come into committee and vote at the required time. Half the time they don't even know these individuals or take the time to care. They just go in there for the vote and get their friends appointed. But at least that process allows the public in to see that it's even happening.

So I ask the new Minister of Tourism, why would you specifically exclude these boards from an appointment process that is out in the public's eye? Why would this Minister of Tourism, new to his position, say, "I don't want individuals to access freedom of information"? Why would this new Minister to Tourism say, "I don't want those appointments to those boards going through the proper committee at government"? The general public will just ask, "What is this government hiding?"

If we had to look at Bill 179, as large a bill as it is—I was leafing through Bill 179 and I wondered about an efficiency process that meant multinational sports teams getting cabinet handouts totalling \$10 million—that that process would be quite efficient, quite open and transparent. Members of the cabinet who are here in the House, I ask especially the new Minister of Tourism, where in Bill 179 is the efficiency around a process at the cabinet table that hands out \$10 million to pro sports teams and the general public knows nothing about this? Where, I ask the new Minister of Tourism, is this information under the Government Efficiency Act?

Hon Frank Klees (Minister of Tourism and Recreation): On a point of order, Speaker: I was wondering if the member opposite would give unanimous consent for me to take over the rest of her speaking time to give all of these explanations she's asked for.

The Deputy Speaker: Member take you seat, please.

Mrs Pupatello: I don't think the Minister of Tourism was prepared to answer any of these questions. It's an enormous bill. I ask the public, where in all of these pages are the benefits to the residents of Windsor West and the residents of Ontario?

I'd like to speak briefly regarding the Ontario Disability Act. I want to tell you about a constituent of mine. This individual was approved as a bona fide individual to receive disability payments because she's disabled. She

was approved in November 2001. That's almost a year ago. Here we are in the new year and this individual has yet to receive a cheque. I ask this government, why? Why in this enormous efficiency act is there nothing that addresses the computer glitch that apparently stole the cheque from my resident, who qualifies of Ontario disability? How many residents out there have gone through the hurdles this government put in place in the development of the Ontario disability program to even get in, whether it's through medical requirements now and more administrivia?

1930

Here's an individual who qualified, who got through the number of hurdles you put in place despite your fancy committee that you call "cutting the red tape out of government." You created gobs of red tape for people with disabilities to try to get through the system, but here I have a constituent who got through it anyway. I asked the new Minister of Tourism, "How can someone be approved in 2001, and we're practically at the end of 2002 and she still hasn't received a cheque? How can that be?"

Wait, let me tell you: at this moment we're waiting for confirmation from the MPP liaison. Do you know what that is? That's a political staff person. Any time an MPP calls, we get assigned some Tory political staffer to wade through all the bureaucracy to find us an answer. Lord knows you don't want Liberal MPPs calling the bureaucrats directly, because we might actually find a solution. So let's just back it up in bureaucracy and go through your MPP liaisons, who just can't seem to figure out why, due to a computer glitch, one of my constituents is doing without the disability support that you people said she was guaranteed. I just think that should have been in Bill 179. It should have been part of the efficiency act.

I want to talk about the family responsibility act and the changes that were made to the Family Responsibility Office. This is going back to the first term of the Harris-Eves government, when Charlie Harnick was still the Attorney General, when Charlie Harnick was still happy to be the Attorney General. They closed down all the offices across Ontario and it left all the local MPPs' offices as the new Attorney General side office responsible for family responsibility. We were chasing around the various bureaucrats, people who were subject to 1994 staffing levels, having to deal with a caseload increase almost immediately of 35%. You just can't get it right.

The Provincial Auditor did a complete review. Do you know what the Provincial Auditor said? He said it was a mess. He said it was completely bungled. I should quote him, actually: 75% of cases in Ontario are in arrears. The auditor noted that when the account goes into arrears, "more aggressive enforcement measures ... were seldom pursued."

I ask the new Minister of Tourism, where in Bill 179 are the efficiency clauses that are going to improve the Family Responsibility Office? We're in the middle of the fall. Christmas is around the corner. I have families living in my riding that are due tens of thousands of dollars and they are heaping up bureaucracy to fight through.

I have stories where women, and these are the cases I'm aware of, sit on their telephone with a long extension cord so they can go about their business cleaning the house while they wait to get through because they've been put on hold on the 1-800 number that they're supposed to call for your Family Responsibility Office. These people have been left hanging there. Then, when it gets to the end of the day, the line just clicks off. So they've waited, in some cases, for an hour and a half or two hours, never to hear a voice at the other end. Why? Because that office was left with 1994 staffing levels, a wild increase in caseloads and apparently a new computer system.

Back to the new computer system: I don't see anything anywhere, I say to the Minister of Tourism, in Bill 179 that talks about an appropriate computer system in this day and age that could at least manage people who are owed money. It's not even your money, it's their money, and the courts have said it's their money. But they still can't get through your government system, and none of that is in Bill 179, the Government Efficiency Act.

There's so much to talk about and so little time.

I want to talk about foreign-trained physicians. Let me tell you that the riding I come from, Windsor West, is second to cities like Ottawa and Toronto only in terms of the multi-ethnic diversity that is Windsor. We have 94 different ethnic communities and play host to numbers of new Canadians every year. That means we have a litany of individuals with a high level of training in a multitude of fields who cannot practise their trade.

In 1995, when I was first elected and came here, we started—let me say to the government, that was almost eight years ago. You could try to blame it on previous governments except you've been here almost eight years. We have pharmacists, skilled trades and carpenters. We have a lack of skilled trades in the field for work and these businesses scrambling to get these people into their businesses to work for them and these individuals who cannot cut through the government red tape to practise their trade or their craft in Ontario. The saddest cases of all perhaps are physicians.

The former Minister of Health is here in the House tonight. He will remember well and fondly the number of times I raised the issue of foreign-trained physicians with then Minister Wilson. These were the days when he told us to just have the women pop across the river to have their babies in Detroit, when we didn't have obstetricians to deal with them in Windsor. I know the former minister remembers those days fondly, as I do.

Here we are in the eighth year of the Harris-Eves government and we are nowhere closer to having foreign-trained physicians practising when most of Ontario is underserved. My colleagues who are here tonight will remember this well because they come from under-served communities.

I'll give you an example I've spoken about in this House before: Dr Mark Gallow. This individual was born and raised in Windsor. He lives in south Windsor with

his family. This man is a family doctor. He gets in his car every morning and drives to Michigan to his family practice. When he comes home every night to his south Windsor home, there he is in the neighbourhood where most of his neighbours don't have a family doctor.

I would ask the new Minister of Tourism where in Bill 179 are we addressing the issue of foreign-trained physicians? Have we not brought this issue up enough in this House for you to realize it's a priority in Ontario? Have we not said a hundred times or a thousand times that we have people who are desperate for that gateway into the health system by a good family doctor, whom they can go to before their symptoms become so chronic or acute that they require emergency care or hospitalization at a much higher cost to the system? This is the gang brought to you by Harris, now Eves, that brings forward hundreds of pages in Bill 179 and nothing that addresses foreign-trained physicians. It is the one area in the health system that you know you have to change.

Here are some of the headlines: "Ontario to Move on Doctor Shortage." That's just this year. This is year eight. "You Can't Always Come Home." These are individuals born and raised, trained elsewhere and are just looking to get through the system, but your system won't allow them through.

"Foreign-trained Docs 'Losing Hope'." I have people in my riding who are running corner stores, who ought to be delivering pharmacology because that's their training, who are more than happy to do whatever it takes, whatever upgrading is required, to meet our high standards and your system won't let them through.

"International Graduates are Put Through Sham Process." You made all this great fanfare several months ago about the Ontario government, "We've got a new, better process for foreign-trained physicians." What kind of a joke was that? We brought the then assistant to the Minister of Health, Brian Patterson, who in his happy days came to Windsor on very short notice. We filled the room with 200 people, all individuals who have various training levels from places around the world, who are desperate to work in my riding. He had to listen firsthand to the examples of people, in some cases, trained at schools that are considered to be manna from heaven when it comes to medical, that are considered the schools to be followed by the rest of the world. They trained there, but they can't come and practise in Ontario.

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It would be so easy to alleviate some of the burden on our health system by getting these people to practise. The government hasn't addressed this in any fulsome manner.

Here are a bunch of quotes from the Minister of Health. He realizes that it's a problem, so I asked the Minister of Health, I asked the new Minister of Tourism to ask the Minister of Health: "What are you doing? What have any of you had to do with Bill 179 and participation in making government efficient for the people who want to work in our system? What has the government done to assist individuals?" We open our arms to people to come in as new Canadians to make our com-

munities colourful, to bring their culture to us, to bring their faith and their worship and everything into our domain and then we say, "Oh, by the way, we're not going to let you practise." We allow schools from around the world to spend their money to train these people, but we are not prepared to put them on some kind of a system that can move them quickly through at much less expense to our government to upgrade, if required, these individuals than it is to train a brand new individual.

Admittedly, you have put various caps on what they are going to be able to do. You're going to take foreign-trained physicians, if they could ever meet the criteria, and then you are going to send them off to underserved communities. Fine. At a minimum, get them in the system. Where in Bill 179, I ask the government, have you addressed foreign-trained physicians? Would you not say, based on the fancy survey the government spent some \$3 million on last year to survey the population of Ontario, the biggest critique of that whole survey process was that you didn't even leave the people a line for a comment? The cards that I got back in this health survey that the Minister of Health went on this massive charade as if he were listening to people, everyone was writing back along the sides and up the margin over to the side. Where was this information ever going to be entered into a computer? You restricted what they could even tell you on a survey and you used their money so that they couldn't talk to you. That's what they are used to with this government.

So here we are in the fall, called back to the House after having been away for months, waiting for information as to the direction in which this government will lead Ontario, and what do we see instead? Nothing, nada, nothing that is going to inspire Ontarians to vote for this bunch again. Here we are looking in earnest. Is there an order-in-council procedure to prevent \$10 million going out the door without anybody knowing about it? It's not in the bill. I ask the cabinet members who are present, can you imagine most Ontario residents watching the news that night that we brought it forward in this House? They caught most cabinet members coming out the side door from the House that evening. They walked out. They threw their hands up in the air. They said, "It wasn't me. I didn't sign that. I didn't know anything about that."

What kind of comfort is that to individuals who watch their government, the group that's supposedly the tax-fighter, the defenders of the taxpayers' purse and they're not even aware of \$10 million going out to some friends somewhere?

It's quite galling to sit here and realize that I just came back from Windsor West again to meet more people who don't have a family doctor. This past weekend we talked with Dr Gervais, a radiologist in my hometown who watches individuals come through his clinic for the most basic of tests, and he has met individuals who should have had their tests weeks sooner. Their cancers were much more progressed because they didn't get the test on time. What kind of bureaucracy needs to be cut through

in an efficiency act by this government that is responsible to see that we meet the medically appropriate time frames on diagnostic tests in this province? I ask the government, where in Bill 179 does that appear? It is not in this bill.

I ask the cabinet ministers, when you are in your home ridings, do people not tell you? We saw the surveys from hospitals across Ontario that said we have women in some cases waiting 12 weeks for a mammogram. That is the difference between a lumpectomy and a mastectomy. Can you imagine cutting off an entire breast because it took too long to get the test?

I ask members of the cabinet, where is this in the efficiency act? We have people who needed a barium enema but waited 12 weeks for it, and the colonoscopy that followed pointed to a cancer that should have been and could have been removed much sooner. That ultimately meant that this patient needed vast amounts of radiology and the outcome was just not good. In the communities I come from, people are dying at higher rates than other places in Ontario, and they happen to be in the same areas where these waits for radiology are too long.

If you are going to come into this House and bring us back into this session to discuss bills and if you are going to call a bill an act to promote government efficiency and improve service, I would ask one thing of this government: that there be the kind of priorities that matter to everyday people in every riding across this province. They should be issues that matter to people, whether that's foreign-trained positions, radiology services, getting people through the Ontario disability support program or helping broken families get family responsibility payments, which is money that is owed to them.

None of these are news to the people who sit in this House, because we bring them forward every day. We talk about them with one minister, and when that minister is fired we talk about them with the next minister. This is not news, but it's up to this government to act, and I am asking this government to finally act on these important issues.

The Deputy Speaker: It's now time for members' questions or comments.

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): I thank very much the two speakers who came before us from the Liberal Party, one from Sarnia-Lambton and one from Windsor West. They did talk very well about this omnibus bill. It is a bill that is supposed to encapsulate many, many things and in fact does, but what it encapsulates is not particularly relevant to the people of Ontario.

I agree with the previous speaker—and I listened to her at some great extent—about people walking around with an extension cord hung to their ear, trying to get through to a government department. It rang 100 bells to me from people in the GTA who every day walk around with an extension cord, trying to get hold of somebody at the 407 corporation: "407-0407 will you ever answer the phone?"

The reality for the people who live out there is that nobody ever answers the phone, and we have come up with

person after person who drives a car and they've got one of those transponders, you know those transponders that have a battery in them. After three or four years the battery runs out, and you go out and try to find somebody who will do something about that battery, but you call and nobody answers the phone. You go down to the kiosk to get your battery repaired and you can't get your battery repaired because they won't repair it unless you first phone the number that nobody answers. It is the reality today of what is happening in so many government privatized services.

I listened to the speaker, and she also talked about foreign-trained physicians. If ever there was a need we needed to talk about in this province, that is it. I would welcome the government, any time you want to bring in an omnibus bill with that in it, because that is what is essential to the people of Ontario; we need foreign-trained physicians, we need them in every single little town and city, and last but not least is the whole area of the hospital efficiencies, but my time is up, and I would be pleased to speak about it my next time round.

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): It is a pleasure for me to rise today after listening to the members opposite rant and rave. The member from Sarnia-Lambton called this bill omnibus. I've heard her say that about every bill, that it's omnibus. I think she might have called the legal aid bill, which is about half a page, an omnibus bill.

The other one, the member from Windsor West, instead of "omnibus" she said "enormous"; it's an enormous bill. You know, what she did not do is talk about anything that was in the bill. She talked about everything else but what was in the bill.

Basically, it is a bill which targets red tape. As you know there was a world conference recently held in Toronto. I'm very happy, and I'm sure our new Minister of Tourism is happy, because in June there was a conference on biotech in Toronto and about 15,000 people came in. A couple of weeks ago from Red Tape to Smart Tape was in Toronto, which is becoming a world-class city. People talk about declining tourism; there's no such thing. Many more people are coming.

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Let's talk about the issue of foreign-trained doctors. It was the Liberal government and the NDP government that decreased the number of entrants. Now they are saying that was a long time ago, but they didn't do anything.

I have a personal example. My wife is a foreign-trained medical graduate who is doing very well, thank you, at the Credit Valley Hospital, one of the best hospitals in Canada, if I may say. The next one, which is going to be even better than that, is going to be in my riding of Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale. It will be the biggest community-based hospital in Canada, with 609 beds. I'm very happy to report to the people at home that we had the groundbreaking ceremony just about two weeks ago. People are extremely happy and they're looking forward to opening the new hospital very quickly.

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): I'm sure that when years have passed and we finally get access to all the information about the things this government has done, we're going to find that Monty Python wrote a number of the bills. For this government to use the word "efficiency" just is the ultimate in irony and humour.

If we talk about special education, it used to be that the people who knew the child decided what that child needed. So we got more efficient. We generated a whole bunch of forms that parents and teachers have to fill out, and they have to make that child sound as bad as they possibly can. That in itself is repugnant. Then they go off to Toronto, and someone who has never seen that child decides what the needs of that child are and how the money is allocated. The money is allocated not based on what that child needs but on how much they have spent in other areas and how much the minister spent on hotels and meals. So it's the exact opposite of efficient.

We can think about insulin pumps. Insulin pumps cost about \$5,700. All the data we have and the data the Minister of Health have say that the insulin pump, for the initial cost of \$5,700, substantially reduces the possibility of heart attacks, kidney failure and a multitude of other problems. This government won't pay the \$5,700. They would sooner pay the \$100,000 when the victim of that heart attack has to go to hospital for a week. Efficiency? It's a long way from it.

The Family Responsibility Office: family responsibility offices were closed all over this province and were combined together in Toronto, and three quarters of the staff were let go. This shouldn't be a shock to anyone: three quarters of the cases are now in arrears. Efficiency? Not at all.

I'm sure if this government is looking for a model for their next election—if they don't steal one from the US—I'd suggest the model, "If it ain't broke, we'll break it."

The Deputy Speaker: Further questions or comments.

Mr Kormos: It is an omnibus bill. We recall back to the seminal omnibus bill, Bill 26. Opposition members warned this government and the public of Ontario that buried deep within Bill 26—and sometimes not so deep—were going to be some major impacts on how business was done in this province, including opening the door wide open to wholesale privatization across the board. We have seen that admonition, that caveat regarding the omnibus Bill 26, take an effect week after week, day after day in this Legislature since.

Once again we have another one, Bill 179. I've got to tell you, when this government talks about efficiencies, what it's really talking about is circumventing the Legislature, circumventing the public committee process, circumventing public scrutiny and circumventing an opportunity for not only members of this chamber but for members of the public to review the contents of the bill, to examine it with a view to how it's going to impact upon them and their respective communities. We have proposals from—what?—16 or 17 different ministries,

covering three, four or five times that many bills, impacting on everything from the Employment Standards Act, the Labour Relations Act and the rights of working people across the board.

This government should do the right thing. Far be it from me to suggest that, because we've prevailed upon them to do the right thing so many times and have been denied the opportunity to see even the most modest sense of responsibility coming from these guys. And what do we get? This bill is going to be rammed through just like every other. Just this afternoon, we had a time allocation motion on Bill 181, the legal aid bill, which constitutes some major and radical reversals of traditional Canadian and Ontarian delivery of legal aid services.

This bill is frightening. This bill is going to have serious impact and the bill regrettably will not receive the debate time or the committee hearings it's warranted.

The Deputy Speaker: Now one of the original speakers may respond for up to two minutes.

Ms Di Cocco: I want to commend the member from Windsor West because she clearly outlined the areas of priority, at least for the Ontario Liberals, that deal with efficiency; in other words, areas such as the Family Responsibility Office, the shortage of doctors in the area, and foreign-trained doctors. Those are areas that this government could have put in this bill if it really wanted to create efficiency in how it delivers services to the people of this province.

I want to also respond to the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale. He suggested, for instance, that I suggested the legal aid bill was an omnibus bill. Considering that in this House apparently people can say whatever they feel like saying without any accuracy, I did not even speak on the legal aid bill. But of course the members like to say things without actually having any facts.

To me the most ominous aspect of this bill is the erosion of transparency.

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): It's bad. It's just bad.

Ms Di Cocco: Yes. And I agree with the member from Niagara Centre about circumventing the rules. That's what a lot of times these efficiency bills have in them, and these omnibus bills that are ominous. There is in my view a continued danger in this province of the erosion of the legislative process that is consistently undermined by these very subversive little ways of taking transparency out of the public business.

The Deputy Speaker: The floor is open for further debate.

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): I am going to split my time with the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale. It is my pleasure indeed to speak to this bill. I am a member of the Red Tape Commission, have been for some time, and I'm very proud of the fact that we've introduced a number of bills that I believe have been a benefit to this country.

I want to make one comment to the member from Sarnia-Lambton. I'm elated with what she said. Her

comment was, "They can say anything they want to without accuracy." I applaud her for that, because that's exactly what comes from across the way. I guess one of the reasons it really annoys me is that sometimes in this House people get up to speak about a bill and it appears they don't read the bill, because they don't say anything about it. I would certainly courier a copy of the bill over to the member from Windsor West, but unfortunately they're involved with International Courier Service at the moment.

Anyway, I'm extremely pleased to speak to this bill, Bill 179, the Government Efficiency Act. It's interesting to note the talk about doctors and so on. Maybe I've been around a little bit too long, but I've been in municipal politics for a long time and I remember a few years ago when my predecessor—and I believe she was from the New Democratic Party—sat in a meeting that we had at the library in Peterborough and said very implicitly, "We do not have a shortage of doctors in this province and in my community." She would not admit it.

The other fact was that a little bit farther back, under the Liberal Party, when Peterborough was trying to get a dialysis unit, they said, "Oh, no, it's not needed down there." We tried to get MRIs, we tried to get CAT scans. "No, not needed down there." Eventually, under this government, under our government, we got a CAT scan, we got a cath lab, we got an MRI and we got a new hospital, because they saw the need for it in my riding.

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Anyway, ladies, let me get back to the bill. If passed, this bill will be the 15th government efficiency and/or red tape reduction bill passed since 1995. I compliment the members, administration and bureaucracy of the Red Tape Commission and I also compliment two Premiers—both the past Premier, Mike Harris, and our present Premier, Ernie Eves—who support and back the Red Tape Commission. For those who have not been in business or involved with red tape, we know exactly what this type of efficiency bill will do.

Interjections.

Mr Stewart: It's interesting to note that we've got a little heckling going on. I think I've hit a nerve of what is probably happening. It's interesting, for these folks across the way who constantly badger and yak, because they don't know what the heck they're talking about, haven't read the bill, were involved with a total amount of red tape and didn't want to do anything about it.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Take your seat, please. Now we have everybody jumping in. We have a full-fledged verbal riot going on. I see the House leader for the third party rushing to his chair, obviously to contribute something. You have a point of order, I'll bet.

Mr Kormos: Yes. Please, Mr Stewart, we weren't heckling you. We weren't even listening to you.

The Deputy Speaker: OK, members, we got a little bit of that out of our systems. That includes my colleague from Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot.

The member for Peterborough will please continue.

Mr Stewart: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I listened very intently to those across the other side. That's why I knew how to possibly answer some of their, I think the word was, inaccuracies. But I have to go on and try to speak to this bill because it's a very important bill.

Bill 179, the Government Efficiency Act, 2002, will indeed help Ontarians receive better service. After all, that's what good government is all about. Let me assure you, having been in business in the private sector for some 35 to 40 years, I know the importance of customer service. Unfortunately, governments in the past have forgotten that. We have to get back to realizing that those folks out there are the ones who are paying the bills. We have to make it as efficient and effective as we can for them to conduct business.

Just take a look at an amendment that would be used by the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines. If the bill is passed, the proposed changes to the Mining Act will allow discretion in waiving or reducing interest penalties to licensees on overdue accounts. Currently the act had been considered overdue, even in cases when a rental invoice arrived after the rent due date. The Ministry of Northern Development and Mines would use the government efficiency bill to try to improve its service to its clientele.

But Bill 179, the Government Efficiency Act, also demonstrates the government of Ontario's commitment to the protection of Ontario's wildlife, an area that I am very concerned about. An amendment to the bill before the House would clarify legal ambiguities and close a loophole that could allow the illegal sale and marketing of specially protected Ontario wildlife. The proposed change would remove the right of a person who does not have a licence or an authorization from the minister to keep an individual member of any specially protected wildlife species for the purpose of personal education. The removal of even a small number of individual specimens from a species that is endangered, threatened or vulnerable can put the sustainability of an entire species at great risk. The proposed change will close a loophole that permitted the keeping of specially protected wildlife for the purposes of personal education without proper approval.

This bill would address a number of issues that have been raised as a result of constitutional decisions made in the courts. The Ministry of the Attorney General is updating the Health Care Consent Act, 1996, and the Substitute Decisions Act to ensure consistency between statutes with regard to the definition of "partner." This will bring Ontario into accord with the recent Supreme Court of Canada ruling regarding same-sex spouses.

This legislation also has important amendments put forward by the Ministry of Transportation. As the honourable members may know, the province of Ontario currently has the safest roads in Canada, with an average of 1.05 road fatalities a year for every 10,000 licensed drivers. We have the lowest rate in the country and the

second-lowest in North America. But again, there is room for improvement.

This government is continuing to work with many transportation partners to maintain and improve this record. In this regard, I would like to draw the members' attention to several road safety and transportation-related measures that are included in the proposed government efficiency bill. All of those transportation-related measures are related to improve safety, eliminate red tape and/or improve efficiency.

One measure I would like to highlight is a proposed addition to the Highway Traffic Act that would place a province-wide ban on the rebuilding, sale, advertising for sale, offering for sale, possession for sale and installation of rebuilt air bags. We are talking about a safety issue. We are talking about a life-saving device. We are talking about making sure that people are protected in their vehicles. It's like putting a couple of patches on a life vest. No thank you. I want to make sure I stay above the water, not below.

Members may be aware that a series of tests on rebuilt air bags were conducted last year in Quebec. These tests were done in response to a complaint about defects in rebuilt air bags that were being sold to auto repair companies by Ontario-based firms. All of us in this House know that there are various products that are manufactured out of province and indeed from Quebec that find their way into Ontario. I can tell you that I don't want my wife or my grandkids in a car with a rebuilt air bag, on the possibility that a death could occur. These tests confirm that the rebuilt air bags are unsafe and could seriously injure the occupants in the vehicle in which they have been installed. As a result, the Ministry of Transportation issued a province-wide news release to alert motorists of the potential dangers of this equipment, which is indeed dangerous.

Since then, the ministry has also conducted an aggressive public awareness campaign warning people of the dangers of rebuilt air bags. The ministry has also sent enforcement officers out to visit auto repair shops that may have purchased rebuilt air bags from Quebec to encourage these dealers to get in touch with affected customers. We must take total responsibility. We must indeed be responsible.

As I mentioned, the proposals in this bill would make it illegal to build, sell, advertise for sale, offer for sale, possess for sale or install rebuilt air bags in Ontario. This legislative action reflects the government's concern about this serious road safety issue. By implementing a province-wide ban and launching a public awareness campaign, the government aims to protect every motorist in Ontario from the hazards posed by rebuilt air bags.

I'm going to pass my time on to the member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale because I know that what he has to say is very important to this debate. We have set a course of improving government customer service for Ontarians with this bill and of achieving regulatory excellence; we will do that. I'm very proud to be a member of the Red Tape Commission. If we can do

anything to improve customer service in this province, I for one want to be part of it.

Mr Gill: First of all I want to compliment the member, my esteemed colleague from Peterborough, who so eloquently spoke on the bill. Where other people just kept saying “omnibus bill,” he spoke on the bill. He talked about what’s in there.

I’m so very happy as well to be a member of the Red Tape Commission. One of the things we have in the Red Tape Commission is that each and every bill the government proposes to bring forward has to come to the Red Tape Commission to make sure that the people in Ontario are not being subjected to red tape, unnecessary regulations. As you know, previously in my two-minute hit I spoke about the wonderful conference that we hosted and attended, Red Tape to Smart Tape. I’m quite pleased this evening to speak for-only seven minutes left now—on the bill, which is what other people call the omnibus bill or enormous bill, but it really is—the people at home should know what we’re talking about—the Government Efficiency Act, 2002.

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These proposed amendments, if passed—we have to assume after debate that people will make up their minds as to which way they’re going to vote; therefore it’s customary to say “if passed, this bill”—will bring about changes to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, Lobbyists Registration Act and the Public Service Act. As the member for Peterborough said, it’s going to improve the customer service. I think all Ontarians are expecting the government to improve the customer service, provide perhaps one-stop service. I’m quite pleased that the government is moving that way because I know now at the Ontario kiosks in the malls you can access a number of services. As many people know, I’m certainly in favour of the smart cards, provided people’s privacy is there. We should be moving toward that more and more.

Let me explain this particular bill. I’m pleased that this government is continuing its proud record of eliminating unneeded red tape and removing many of the outdated pieces of legislation that only serve to add complications without any real substantive benefit. I’m disappointed that it has taken so long for these to come forward, so I’ll admit that perhaps we should have done it earlier. The members opposite, when they were in government, never did anything like this. They felt it was the government’s job to increase the red tape; they felt it was the government’s job to make it more difficult for people to access services. We don’t believe so. We believe in less government. That’s why we were the government that reduced the number of people from 123 to 103 members. Like I said, it’s taken too long. Nonetheless, we’re working toward cutting through the red tape.

Much of this bill deals with legislation that is decades old and has never been seriously reviewed, debated, or put into the House for even routine housekeeping. That is the case with this cluster of amendments—long overdue.

It’s a perfect example of the years of neglect from previous governments that this government is still trying to disentangle. It never ceases to amaze me how much unneeded red tape is still on the books. As was said earlier, I think by another member, and I’m accessing the Hansard—Mr Beaubien, my esteemed colleague from Sarnia, said that this bill streamlined and updated—

Interjection: He’s not from Sarnia.

Mr Gill: Well, he should be from Sarnia, then. If this bill is passed, it will clarify, streamline and update dozens of acts of 15 different ministries. The bill would repeal 15 outdated acts and amend nearly 90 others. This government has already repealed more than 57 outdated acts, amended more than 200 acts and eliminated more than 1,900 unnecessary regulations since 1995.

The changes to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and to the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act are truly innocuous and routine. In fact, it only affects the French versions of the acts. When members talk about omnibus bills, what this really means is that it only affects the French version of the acts to ensure that they are consistent with the English versions. I don’t expect that’s a huge thing, but it has to be done.

It amazes me that it has taken so long for something like this to come forward, but it is a perfect example of the types of amendments that are brought forward in this bill. It amazes me, after the years and years of these bills being brought forward, how many of them remain on the books and still need to be perfected.

Most importantly, these changes do not affect the way in which a person might access information held by the government; they only make it easier. Nor would they change the government’s obligation to protect the privacy of those whose information they hold. They simply clarify a subtle difference between the two versions to ensure that people reading the act in different languages read the same law.

The only problem I see with this bill is the fact that it took so long to come forward because of the volume of amendments that came before it.

In regard to the changes proposed for the Lobbyists Registration Act, I know that this could seem like the government is trying to sneak in changes to the law so that it would loosen the restrictions on people lobbying the government. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. There is nothing in this bill that would change the responsibility of a person who lobbies the government. A lobbyist would still be required to disclose the ministries, the lobby, who pays their salary and the matters for which they lobby. The bill only removes the need for cabinet to establish the processing fees by putting it in the hands of the registrar, subject to the approval of the Chair of Management Board. This just seems to make sense to me. There’s really no sense in making it necessary for cabinet to establish these rates, especially when the processing fees apply only to those who file paper copies of their forms. Those who file electronically are not subject to this fee.

As we all know, the use of electronic filing of government documents is becoming more and more popular. In fact, I'm told that almost no one files these documents manually any more.

As far as the changes to the Public Service Act are concerned, it was somewhat surprising to see that it was not already a requirement to inform an employee in writing that they had been released from employment. In fact, I'm told that this is a nearly universal practice. It seems very logical that we should put this standard in place.

So this, as I have explained—and there are many more talks that I have, but I don't think I'm going to get to them tonight—but I want to assure the people at home that it's a reduction of the red tape. I'm quite sure that after the members opposite do end up reading this bill and talking about this bill, they'll support it.

The Deputy Speaker: The members now have up to two minutes for questions and comments.

Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot): Members of this House will perhaps forgive some of us opposite here when we begin to worry a little bit about whether it's an omnibus bill or an ominous bill; it's enormous. Folks, that means it's very, very large and it has all kinds of implications.

When I hear the blather about red tape on the other side, I can't help but think of the language we heard immediately prior to the Walkerton difficulty—eliminating all the red tape around water regulations. That was even before we got into eliminating some of these so-called efficiency experts who understood that E coli could kill you if you consumed it—but that's for another day.

The member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale and the member from Peterborough spoke about the health care system. By the way, let me just say that I think the section on air bags is just great and long overdue. So that's part of the bill that makes some sense.

But I want to just spend the last 50 seconds or so talking about the health care system. I don't know if members opposite know, but 94% of the people who end up in the emergency wards of our four acute-care hospitals are there because they don't have a family doctor. If you want to talk about efficiency, particularly in the health area, that would be something you should be looking at.

Australia has a very good system—and I offer this to the government members free of charge. They made the decision, by the way, that they want to see more doctors. They recruit young people at a very early age and mentor them all the way through high school. They enter into contracts with them, in exchange for so many years of support, to in fact provide medical care back in the isolated rural communities from whence they have come. They don't have a doctor shortage problem in Australia—one small tip for the government opposite, if they're concerned about efficiency in health care.

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Mr Prue: I listened to the two speakers, one from the riding of Peterborough, the other from Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale, with considerable interest, and a little

humour, I thought, thrown in as well. Although they were not trying to be humorous, I could not help but listen about the road safety and the red tape. There was much talk about air bags and I have to tell you the puffery that came out of the speaker was amazing. The hot air that also came out was really quite amazing and the ethereal comment on what was lighter than air was also really quite amazing. The reality is that this whole section on air bags, although overdue and probably needed, is really much ado about nothing.

The freedom of information from the second speaker talking about going to the kiosk and getting that information, the reality is that when you go to those kiosks, they are not personed, there is nobody there. If they are there, they can't answer the questions. If they are not there, the computer doesn't work. Quite frankly, they are frustrating for ordinary citizens. This has caused not a decrease in red tape but an increase in red tape because if you ever want to find out what is happening from one of those kiosks, you cannot find a person who is qualified to answer, or you cannot find a computer that is properly monitored to actually work.

You went on to talk about the changing of an act to change the French words to coincide with the English words, but I want to tell the member opposite that under the languages act of Canada it is quite clear that when the two are in conflict, the French shall predominate because the French language is written in such a way that it is far more accurate than the English words. Anyone in Canada who is a lawmaker or a lawyer who looks at the two acts will know that the French language act is the actual act that makes sense and the English one should be brought into conformity with the French and not vice versa.

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): I wanted to just add my comments to the two distinguished speakers who were speaking tonight: Mr Stewart from Peterborough and Mr Gill from Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale.

It was very enlightening to hear, first of all, that they had read the bill, because they were speaking about it, and secondly to hear their comments on it. Yes, I guess we could play a lot with the words of the repaired safety devices in cars, the air bags. It does bring up some visual things, but the actual fact is that it was a great danger and a safety impediment to anybody who bought a car. The point that I want to make is that the car didn't have a big sign across it: "This car is equipped with a repaired device from Quebec," or any other place. It didn't say. Nobody had any idea that these were even in our cars and that they were being used. So there are a lot of good things in this bill and I appreciated particularly those two members pointing out those things and the highlights that they have brought up in the bill. I am sure that we will hear afterwards, as a matter of fact, we may even hear from the party across, those things that are in the bill as opposed to those things that aren't. There are a whole lot of things that aren't. It didn't mention a thing about the beautiful town of Listowel and all of the great things that

happen there. I could go on and on. I just wanted to compliment them.

Mr Parsons: The word “efficiency” scares me. I know we’ve talked about air bags and it’s great to focus on air bags, but the word “efficiency” scares me because I know that this government believes the most efficient form of government is dictatorship and let’s move toward it.

So let’s look at this bill. Look at the size of the bill. There’s a lot more than air bags in it. Let’s look at the part that affects democracy.

Under the amendments proposed by the Ministry of Natural Resources: “It provides for the minister, rather than the Lieutenant Governor in Council, to approve the authority’s decisions regarding the employment and salaries of its staff”; “It provides for the minister, rather than the Lieutenant Governor in Council, to set the remuneration and expense” accounts; “It no longer requires the authority to obtain the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council” etc.

What this bill is trying to do is to move things behind closed doors. Right now, appointments are having to be done in public session and reviewed by the committee of the Legislature. This is an efficiency, but it is at the cost of democracy. It is moving things behind doors to allow things to happen quietly.

What’s this government’s track record when they can do things behind the doors, when they can do a walk-around and give away \$10 million to their friends? We know that when we see secrecy it’s not efficient for the people of Ontario; it’s awfully expensive for the people of Ontario.

We see that if one makes a donation to a leadership candidate there appears to be a correlation that instead of one and a half slot machines you get 800 slot machines. That’s what happens when business is done behind closed doors. For a government that has preached accountability for school boards and municipalities and hospitals, let’s have some accountability from this government. We haven’t seen a report card from this government because, you know, it’s easy to pick a victim and focus all of the public’s look on them, pick someone and bad-mouth that person or that group or that organization, because it takes the public’s eyes off what this group is doing, which is reprehensible.

The Deputy Speaker: One of the two original speakers may respond.

Mr Stewart: I’d like to suggest to the member from Prince Edward-Hastings that the report card was the election of 1999. It’s called, put back into power the government that is accountable, that is responsible.

It’s interesting when I hear something from the member from Beaches-East York about much ado about nothing. Would you say that when somebody is killed in a car accident because of an air bag that was deficient because it had been repaired, because it hadn’t been repaired right? What would you say to them, to that mother or that father? Would you say that this is much ado about nothing? I suggest, if it were my grandkids or

my wife or my family, I wouldn’t be talking about much ado about nothing.

I get absolutely overcome in this House when I listen to people who say things that have absolutely no relevance to what we’re talking about. How soon they forget. How soon they forget about the lack of responsibility, accountability and efficiency back in the late 1980s, in the early 1990s. I made a comment about the member prior to me who said we didn’t have a doctor shortage in Peterborough—absolutely not factual.

I look at this. I look at the endangered species; we are trying to protect them. Is that much ado about nothing? I don’t think so. It’s much the same as your comment about air bags.

Let me assure the members the report card was in 1999, and I can tell you as well the report card will be returning this government in the year 2003 or 2004.

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Further debate?

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): I am very happy to have the opportunity to share some comments about Bill 179, the Government Efficiency Act. It certainly is my intention to focus my remarks on what is contained in the bill, and some of the concerns I have around what is contained in the bill.

It is a massive bill; it is an omnibus bill. It has been part of the record, and for those people who would be watching they would have heard that reference on more than one occasion over the course of this debate. It is a significant piece of legislation that impacts 15 ministries and it involves over 100 pieces of legislation. So—

The Deputy Speaker: Sorry, take your seat. I want to say to the government members, as I’ve mentioned earlier, I don’t hear anybody doing anything deliberate, but all of you have loud voices that carry, and you’re interrupting the right of the member to have the floor, and I know that none of you want to impede her right to have her say. So with that I would ask the member to continue please.

2030

Mrs Dombrowsky: I thank the members opposite as well, for your consideration.

With regard to the bill that we are debating, and I do want to focus my remarks on what is contained in the bill, one of the areas of concern that I have—I will read from the act, it’s on page Roman numeral x, with regard to the Independent Health Facilities Act:

“The Independent Health Facilities Act allows the minister”—the minister—“to control the maximum allowable consideration for the goodwill value of the licence of the independent health facility in the sale or transfer of the facility. The amendments will remove from the act all controls over the maximum allowable consideration.”

I want to spend a little bit of time explaining, for the people of the province and certainly on behalf of the people I represent, the impact of that very short part of the bill. In 1989, under David Peterson, the Independent Health Facilities Act came into being. In that act it was

defined that the licensing and the funding and the quality assurance required for health facilities would be regulated, that health facilities would be licensed and that the government had a responsibility to ensure that the licences were managed and transferred in a fair and equitable process, and that there should not be a bidding war that would get underway and that the highest bidder would ultimately be the service provider. There was a cap placed on the value of a health facility licence. This bill is going to remove that.

The other point I want to make on this is that the main purpose of that bill was to ensure that independent health clinics were properly regulated. This was to prevent the sort of US-style takeover that can happen when multinational companies come in and purchase a number of health facilities. However, this government has moved very quickly to dismantle the sections in the Independent Health Facilities Act. One thing it did—there was also a part of that act, when it was introduced in 1989—is it gave preference to Canadian companies. That was one of the first parts of the act that this government removed when it came to power. So there is no preference for Canadian suppliers of service to provide services within health facilities in Ontario.

For people in my riding, I think it would be fair to say that would be their expectation, that they would like to think that when health services are provided to facilities in our riding that those service providers would be Canadian at least. This government moved to remove that from the act.

Now, the second part, the second step that they are taking that will impact this particular part of the health facilities act is to remove the cap that exists at the present time for individuals or corporations who would want to purchase a licence to run such a facility. I know that the people I represent would see this as not appropriate, that there should be a cap, that there should be a level playing field, that it should not become a bidding war within our communities so that multinational companies, then, are able to come in and bid to purchase the licences and become the agent with the licence in our communities across Ontario.

Specifically related to that, we heard the members of the government opposite talk about the efficiency act and that it's going to remove the unnecessary red tape that exists that presents some significant problems for the people of Ontario. I guess the point I would like to make particularly about this part of the act, the independent health facilities portion of this act, is, how is it removing red tape? How is it really going to make a difference to the average person in my riding in terms of the red tape? I haven't had people calling my office saying, "We have so much red tape to go through dealing with this particular issue." I would suggest that the red tape in this particular case is really only going to benefit a very few.

I think it's important to state for the people at home that there are many sections of this act that, on their own, I would be able to support. The problem we have when we are presented with an omnibus bill of this size is that

while most of it—and I believe the member from Peterborough has made reference to some sections that are truly important and valid. He talked about some amendments to the protection of wildlife species. That indeed is important and I think is appropriately considered. The Highway Traffic Act as well is amended, and I don't personally have any problem with what is being presented around those issues. So I think it is important to understand that while regrettably I believe I am going to have to vote against this bill, it's not because I am totally against everything that is contained in it, but certainly there are sections of it that cause me enough concern and are problem enough for me that prevent me from saying that I support the legislation.

I'm very perplexed by that. I would hope that we lived in the kind of world where those troublesome sections could be removed and that we could talk about them, set them aside and see if there's a way we can come to some resolution. But I don't believe it is the intent of the government to move in that direction, with what is contained in the bill, and to address our issues in that way. So the only tool left at my disposal is to stand in the Legislature and only focus on those parts of the act that I have a problem with, that I am not able to support and that I don't think serve the best interests of the people in my riding or in the province.

Another part of the act that concerns me greatly is around the issue of transparency. We know there are sections of the act that actually step away from transparency, remove transparency. We on this side of the House believe that we should be moving toward more transparency whenever we can. We should be looking to make information available to the public that is available to various agencies within the government. However, within the body of this act, there are exemptions to freedom of information.

I noted with some interest when the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale talked about freedom-of-information issues within the act. He said there were, "some subtle differences to what is in place at the present time." Well, I would suggest that when you exempt an individual from freedom of information, that's more than a subtle difference; that is a significant change. It is significant in that the government is saying that this is a body or an individual who would be exempt from the scrutiny of the public reviewing expenditure patterns or whatever.

There's an example I'd like to bring to the attention of members of the government as a reminder to them of what can happen when the public does not have the benefit of reviewing that kind of information. A classic example was at Hydro One, where it was exempt from freedom of information and the public only learned about inappropriate spending practices at Hydro One from documents that were filed with the IPO. We are all painfully aware of what followed, what ensued when that information ultimately did become public. It should have been within the public domain much sooner than it was. Unfortunately it was not, because there was an exemption

to freedom of information. Within the body of this act we have yet another proviso that enables an arm of the government to be exempt from that kind of public scrutiny.

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I have a problem with that and, if that were not in the bill, along with some other sections, I could possibly support it. But I will not stand in my place and support a piece of legislation that in effect provides someone with a blanket, with a cover of secrecy in terms of how business is done, using taxpayers' money on their behalf, and they do not have the right to know how those dollars are spent on their behalf. So for that reason I'm not able to support this bill.

Another part of Bill 179 that is a problem for me is that it amends the Securities Act and the Commodity Futures Act so that appointments to the Financial Disclosure Advisory Board and the Commodity Futures Advisory Board become ministerial appointments. At the present time, people who would be appointed to those boards are order-in-council appointments. When there is an order-in-council appointment, it requires a process where names are made public, where every member of the Legislature has an opportunity to review who is intended to be appointed to all agencies, boards and commissions of this Legislature and any member of the Legislature can call someone who is intended to be appointed to a meeting for an interview. Basically, this is the only job interview these people will have for their appointment to that board. I think it's very appropriate. It certainly is a perfect opportunity for all members of the Legislature. The committee is made up of members of the government, the opposition and the third party. Naturally, the majority are government members and consequently intended appointees are almost always appointed.

However, having said that, because I serve on that particular committee, I am aware that from time to time, through questioning, it becomes evident that it might not be in the person's better interests to be appointed to a board, to pursue that, or it becomes clear that it might not be in the best interests of the people of the province for that appointment to be made. So on rare occasions—but it does happen—those appointments are reconsidered or people have chosen to withdraw from being appointed, which they are able to do.

The point I want to make with regard to the bill is that it removes that requirement, that opportunity for all members of the Legislature to interview someone who would be intended to be appointed to these two boards. That responsibility now rests solely with the minister. I believe that is very inappropriate and it's a very quiet way of slipping in something in a very innocuous manner. Nonetheless, in my opinion it is quite significant that the way people have typically and traditionally come to receive these roles is going to be changed with this piece of legislation.

The member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale has indicated in his remarks that the efficiency act that we're debating tonight removes unnecessary legislation. I

guess with the issues that I've referenced, I'm having great difficulty understanding how it is unnecessary. How is it unnecessary that the people of the province have an opportunity to interview people who are intended to serve them on various boards; in this particular case, the Financial Disclosure Advisory Board and the Commodity Futures Advisory Board? How is that unnecessary? How is it that the people of the province are better served when those appointments are made directly by the minister, at the will of the minister? I'm having difficulty understanding and quite frankly accepting that it's unnecessary; quite the opposite, I think it is necessary. How is it unnecessary legislation that requires individuals or groups of people to be exempt from the freedom of information act? How is that unnecessary legislation? Quite the opposite: I think it is necessary and it should continue to be incorporated in the laws of our province for the good of the people who pay taxes and who actually pay for the information that they will no longer be able to access.

With regard to removing the cap on the licences for independent health facilities, how is that unnecessary legislation? What has the government been presented with that has convinced them that it's not necessary to have this cap? I don't know that that case has been put certainly in this room. I have to say that in my riding I certainly can't remember a call on this particular issue from anyone who would suggest to me that it is absolutely unnecessary to have this cap in place. So it naturally begs the question: why, then, is it here?

I know that there has been a great deal made about references that have been made during the course of this debate relating to government efficiency around realities that we all deal with in our ridings about the inefficiency of this government—glaring inefficiencies with regard to the Family Responsibility Office and the Ontario disability support program. We on this side of the House dare to remind the government that if you want to talk inefficiency, boy, can we tell you some stories. Then we get scolded by the government members. "You're not sticking to the script. This is an efficiency act and this is where we think we need to be more efficient."

I think we have some responsibility, and I will take the time to stand in my place to say to the government, you want to talk about being more efficient? Pay some attention to those families and children who are being denied the dollars that the courts of this province have said they deserve. Pay some attention to that. Any time you bring in a piece of legislation that aggressively looks to ensure that that money gets dispensed in a more timely way, I'll be the first to stand on my feet and support that legislation. Why isn't it here now? That's my question to the members of the government.

With regard to the Ontario disability support program, another area where there can be many improvements made around efficiency, why is it, then, that when people are determined to be disabled in this province, they wait months and in some cases upwards of a year to get money that is due to them? I've got to think in the

scheme of things, if there was a scale, some way to measure the importance of issues—when we talk about some of the things this bill deals with and how it really impacts people in their daily lives and when we talk about family responsibility inefficiencies and Ontario disability inefficiencies, I've got to think, if there was a scale, this bill would be on the light side of the scale in many respects.

So we put the challenge to the government, which has the role and the responsibility to bring forward meaningful legislation, to set an agenda in this province that really is going to have a positive impact on the people we represent. Consider those issues too. We have a responsibility in the opposition not only to comment on what's in the bill and where it could be improved or where it's just not acceptable, but also to speak about what should be in the bill and isn't. I'm very happy that I've had the opportunity to share with the people in this room where I think this bill falls short and why, therefore, I cannot support it.

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

2050

Mr Prue: I listened to the previous speaker and much of what she had to say. I think there were really three items that she spoke of in her 20 minutes that deserve comment. The first was appointments to boards and commissions. All of us in government, no matter at what level of government that may be—federal, provincial or municipal—from time to time are called upon to appoint people to boards and commissions. For the most part, most of that is quite benign, most of it seems to work out well and the best people are chosen for the job. But from time to time, as the government well knows—in fact, questions were raised today in question period—when it gets too close to home, when it involves previous people from the cabinet, previous people who have given money to one party or another, it may cause difficulties.

I was very pleased when the government—in a sort of side comment, the minister of culture and tourism announced that the Honourable Herb Gray has been appointed. It seemed to me to be a departure from the government and I welcome much more of that in the future.

She also talked about the dispensation of monies.

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Culture): Culture and tourism aren't together.

Mr Prue: Sorry—tourism and whatever. Tourism, anyway. Excuse me.

She also talked about the dispensation of monies and ODSP. I've only got 35 seconds so I'd like to talk about the ODSP. She has hit upon a point that I think troubles many of us in this House. People who have disabilities in this province have been neglected for far too long. We realize they have been separated from the general welfare, which was a good thing, but the reality is that most of them living in Ontario have meagre incomes on which to live, and for the last number of months, the last

number of years, there has been no real increase. We really need as a government to look after the most vulnerable in our society, and we need to start making provision for their increase in revenues year on year.

Mr Parsons: I've learned that whenever my bank or my gasoline company tells me they're going to become more efficient, it's either going to cost me more money or less service or potentially both. This government loves to use the word "efficiency." People who are drawing money from the Family Responsibility Office know exactly what efficiency means; it means less service.

I do want to compliment the member for Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington because she read this document, went through it and precisely analyzed it. She did not read a speech prepared by the minister's office, as I suspect some of the members opposite did. This member very clearly read and understood this bill.

We face a dilemma on this side that she expressed in her comments. Parts of this bill are good; parts of this bill are excellent. But there's a hostage—an expression I didn't learn until after I came this Legislature—within the bill. You can take a very, very good item, put it in a bill, and then put 50 very bad things for the people of Ontario in it. Then when we vote against this bill—as we will have no choice but to do because it is taking and moving more things behind closed doors, removing public knowledge, removing public protection—this government will stand up and say, "The member for so-and-so voted against the air bag bill." It could be separated. There was no need to produce a document this thick. Or perhaps the need for this thick document is to make it almost impossible for the public to analyze it. When they go on to a computer to try to access a bill off the Internet, this is absolutely massive, and the general public will, I fear at times, abandon trying to read the entire document. I would suggest that may even be what this government wants: to put everything together in one bill so there isn't a real opportunity for the people of Ontario to become aware of it.

There is an obligation even more then on the members of the opposition to bring it forward. We're ridiculed. We're told, "What about the air bags?" If the air bag was that important, it could have been done otherwise.

Mr Johnson: I just wanted to add my comments to those in regard to the member for Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington. Indeed, she has read the bill and confined her remarks to those parts that interest her or at least have captured her remarks tonight.

It is a lengthy bill, no doubt about it. There are a lot of things that cross a lot of interest boundaries. I wouldn't like to suggest there's anybody who will take a great deal of interest in absolutely every one of the parts of the bill. I haven't heard, for instance, any comments so far on a part that interests and intrigues me, and that's the Insurance Act, the appointment of an actuary and so on. The reason I bring it up is that in the riding I represent we have quite a few of what are called farm mutual insurance companies. These particular changes will interest them if it affects their operations. Because they are not

big Bay Street firms and so on, they operate in a small community and depend a lot on volunteer help and the contributions of local members who are policyholders to help in the operation of their company. I appreciate the comments made and I look forward to more comments about other parts of the bill.

The Deputy Speaker: The last spot goes to the member for St Catharines.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I was pleased that the member identified that we have a very complex omnibus bill, parts that are both supportable and not supportable. This has become a trend with this government toward this kind of legislation and it's most unfortunate. I always hope, in the best of all legislative bodies—what you would have were bills which were contentious, where there was considerable disagreement—that you could put those separate from those where there was clear agreement. The reference to the air bags—clearly I don't think anybody in the House would have opposed that—should have gone through in 15 minutes, that kind of thing. But if you put it in a bill with other provisions that are not supportable, at the end of the day the tricksters who sit in the Premier's office, or others who scheme these things out, send out the literature and say, "Well, he opposed this or he opposed that."

Some of the provisions identified, for instance, that are of concern are those which restrict the public's right to know. In regard to the Ontario Securities Commission, there's an amendment in addition to other exemptions. The Ontario Securities Commission will not be required to disclose any information that they receive from any person or entity other than an employee of the commission who provides services to the commission. In light of what has happened, particularly in the United States but in some Canadian jurisdictions, I think it's important that the public have as much information available as possible. I remember, when we were dealing with Hydro One and those exorbitant salaries were being paid and the provisions if you happened to get fired and so on, we couldn't get this information because they were exempted from the freedom of information act. It was only after the independent operator had some documentation that we were able to glean it from that. I think the member has been correct in exercising caution over this bill.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington may take up to two minutes to respond.

Mrs Dombrowsky: I'd like to thank the members for East York, Prince Edward-Hastings, Perth-Middlesex and St Catharines for their remarks and comments. I appreciate it has been recognized that in an omnibus bill some parts are very good, and I'm very happy to say that there are parts that I would like to support. I would like to support the bill because it does include the section on air bags, which I think is important and will benefit the people of the province. I would like to be able support those amendments to the Highway Traffic Act. I would like to be able to support those sections that will protect

wildlife in our province. But, sadly, the bill has hostages, and those would be the parts that I referenced. Because of that, I'm sadly in a position of having to stand up and speak at some length about those parts of the bill that I have a problem with and why I have a problem with them.

The other point of my discussion is that I would hope the government, and this is second reading, would see fit to amend the bill as it has been presented because they share the concerns that have been put forward by the opposition, although I have to say in my brief time here I have not seen that. That is regrettable because I really think it is true democracy when we are able to listen to each other as representatives of the people and look for ways to make good laws in the province of Ontario.

2100

I have had to share with this House tonight why I don't think this omnibus bill is all about good law. There are some good laws in it, but not all of them will be good, so sadly, I am going to be in a position to vote against this unless it is amended before third reading.

Mr Prue: This is a difficult bill because it is so large, there are so many things contained within it. In fact, much of the bill is very good; I'm going to tell the members opposite, much of the bill is very good. But I have the same problem with this bill that I have had several times in the past.

I think back to my first year here in this august hall. There was an excellent bill for Durham College. I think all members of the House supported establishing a university at Durham College. I drove by there the other day and I saw the magnificent place it's going to be and the students were all happy to go to that facility; it's going to be the newest university in Ontario. But I also remember that it was tied into the budget, so that those members in the House who were opposed to where the government was going on the budget had no choice but to vote against Durham College.

I remember the day when it came up for debate. There were people sitting in the audience, here in the members' gallery. I told them not to worry, that I was sure the combined government forces would vote for the bill, that all the opposition members, including the Liberals and the New Democratic Party, and all the government members supported their view that Durham College should be established. The problem was that it was contained wholly within another bill that many of us did not appreciate and would not support.

The same is true of this giant omnibus bill that has been dropped upon us. "Omnibus" is actually from the Latin; it means "includes everything." This bill literally includes everything. I went through and tried to look at all the things this bill includes. It is really quite remarkable. It restricts the right to strike and to bargain. It talks about downloading. It talks about domestic violence. It talks about streamlining the privatization process. It talks about the employment standards. It talks about universities. It talks about legislation that's tough on criminals. It talks about the certified general accountancy act. It

talks about the Charities Accounting Act, the Commissioners for taking Affidavits Act, the Courts of Justice Act, the Crown Administration of Estates Act, the Domestic Violence Protection Act, the Escheats Act, the Evidence Act, the Expropriations Act, the Health Care Consent Act, the Justices of the Peace Act, the Law Society Act, the McMichael Canadian Art Collection Act, the Ontario Heritage Act, the Provincial Offences Act, the Public Accountancy Act, the Public Guardian and Trustee Act, the Regulations Act, the Science North Act, the Substitute Decisions Act, the International Interests in Mobile Equipment Act.

It talks about the Child and Family Services Act, the ODSP Act, the Ontario Works Act. It talks about, in amendment 10, the Alcohol and Gaming Regulation and Public Protection Act, the Boundaries Act, the Collection Agencies Act, the Gaming Control Act, the Land Registration Reform Act, the Land Titles Act, the Liquor Licence Act. It talks about the Registry Act, the Vital Statistics Act, the Statute Law Amendment Act.

It talks again about the Commodity Futures Act, the Credit Unions and Caisses Populaires Act, the Insurance Act, the Pension Benefits Act, the Securities Act, the Statistics Act. It talks about the Health Care Accessibility Act, the Health Insurance Act, the Health Protection and Promotion Act, the Immunization of School Pupils Act, the Independent Health Facilities Act, the Ministry of Health Appeal and Review Boards Act, the Trillium Gift of Life Networks Act, the Toronto Hospital Act.

It goes in section 5 to the Ambulance Services Collective Bargaining Act, the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act, the Employment Standards Act, the Labour Relations Act, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act.

It talks about the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the Lobbyists Registration Act, the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the Public Service Act.

It talks about the Algonquin Forestry Authority Act, the Beds of Navigable Waters Act, the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, the Forest Fires Prevention Act, the Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act, the Oil, Gas and Salt Resources Act, the Public Lands Act. It talks about the Mining Act, the Northern Services Boards Act, the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, the Highway 407 Act, the Highway 407 East Completion Act, the Interpretation Act. It talks about the Ministry of Correctional Services Act, the Northern Services Boards Act, the Police Services Act.

It talks about the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act. It talks about the Highway Traffic Act, the City of Toronto Act, the Fairness is a Two-Way Street Act, the Milk Act, the Ministry of Transportation Act, the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission Act, the Truck Transportation Act.

I hope I didn't leave any out. That's what's in this bill. This is a huge bill making minor modifications. Now, we are asked to approve all of these things. The government has asked that all of these things be rolled into one bill. If

any member in the government or in the opposition finds fault with a single section, with a single act, in what is being proposed, our only alternative is to say no. Our only alternative is to tell you that we don't think this particular act should be changed or that what you're doing with this act is somehow improper. The reality is that most of what is contained in all these changes is probably agreeable to everyone, including members on this side of the House, members on the government side, the general public and the people who are directly affected by those acts. Most of them are nothing more than housekeeping.

I just want to talk about eight, just eight. Out of all those 25, 30, 50 or however many there are, there are only eight things that I think perhaps the government should look at. If you would withdraw them, if you would change them, if you would just think about them again, then certainly the remaining 40, 50 or whatever number is in there I would certainly be happy to support and I'm sure all members of the House would be happy to support.

The first one, and I think the fundamental one for me as a New Democrat, has to be the right to strike and to bargain. The Labour Relations Act and amendments quite clearly talk about construction and what was happening in Ontario several years ago, with the construction industry, where one unit, one bargaining agent of the construction industry, went out on strike, followed by another, followed by another, which delayed new home sales. We all know that the construction problem was a serious one. But this regulation says it is extended to the year 2005, and it allows people who have rights under the charter and the Constitution of Canada to collectively bargain and to strike for no more than 46 days every three years. Quite frankly, this is putting a little bit of a noose around the necks of men and women in the construction industry. Frankly, they need the right to strike for as long as it takes to get a good collective agreement.

I know some members opposite may think this is a difficult thing, and I would agree that a strike of beyond 46 days is difficult for everyone. It is difficult for new home buyers. It is difficult for the construction industry, the people who provide the jobs. It is difficult for all the ancillary industries, whether they be brick-making companies or lumber companies or people who make widgets or nails or anything else that goes into new home construction. But it is also difficult for the men and women who work in the construction industry to be hamstrung by saying that they cannot collectively bargain, they cannot strike beyond the 46-day period. Quite frankly, I would hope they never have to strike for more than a day in their lives—even a day might be too long. But the reality is that they have an obligation to themselves and to their members and to the families for whom they provide wages and money to make sure they can come to the best possible agreement they can. To limit them to 46 days, I would suggest, is doing a disservice to the hundreds of thousands of men and

women in this province who work in the construction industry and who provide an excellent service to all of Ontario, who provide huge monies to our treasury and who are the impetus of most of the growth that Ontario has shown over the past number of years.

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The second item that I have some difficulty with is the Employment Standards Act. All that is being changed here is a relatively minor change, because people can apply for a vacation as they always could if they get two or three or four weeks vacation per year. What the Employment Standards Act, in a change a year ago, said is that they could take it in as little as one-day increments or two- or three-day increments and that the employer no longer has to give anyone a two- or three-week vacation to which they're entitled. That was bad enough, but that's old legislation. What is being suggested here is that employees who ask their employer, "How much vacation do I have?" now under this legislation will only be able to ask them one time a year, "Can you outline for me how much vacation I have? I'd like to take another two or three days off." If six months goes by and they can't remember how much time they have left, they are not entitled, under this legislation, to go any more to their employer and say, "How much time do I have left? I'd like to take a few more days or a few more weeks off." The employer under this legislation—and the Conservatives are very proud of this; they asked the employers—if they don't want to provide this information, no longer has to tell them.

Quite frankly, this is extremely regressive. Why are you doing this? Certainly an employee anywhere in this province should be able to walk up to his or her boss and say, "How much vacation time do I still have left? My spouse and I want to go on vacation for two weeks down to Niagara to see the wine country."

Mr Bradley: Hear, hear.

Mr Prue: Exactly. "We want to do this. We want to take two weeks. Do I have two weeks vacation left?" Under this legislation, the guy says, "Come back next year and I'll tell you. I don't have to tell you now." Why you want to do that to any employee in Ontario is beyond me.

The third thing I have a problem with is the domestic violence—not that what you're doing isn't the right thing. What you've done is that you've limited this now to six pilot projects, and the six pilot projects will probably tell you a lot more than what your previous legislation said. The previous one said you had to provide protection from domestic violence 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year. Clearly that has not worked. Clearly your policies have not worked. So you're now saying, let's go down to six pilots. I don't have a problem with that and maybe it's not a problem. But surely you must admit that whatever you're changing this from hasn't worked, and I would suggest to all of you to make it work.

Number 4 is my old bugaboo, the 407. The 407 has been sold off to private hands. Quite frankly, I have to

tell you it's one of the disgraces of this province. People who drive that every day know they're being gouged. They know they can't get information. They know, when the transponder stops working, that they can't get a new transponder. They know that when they can't get a new transponder, they pay transponder fees. They know that when they go to get a new transponder, you can't get on the phone; 407-0407 never, ever, ever, ever answers the phone. I challenge any of you to phone till midnight tonight. You won't get through. And if you go to the kiosk and say, "Here's my transponder," they will not deal with you.

There it is. You are going to now allow that if a cheque is bounced, if somebody on the other side sends in a cheque that bounces, they can lose their licence because of this legislation. Why should people lose their licence when a cheque is bounced when this corporation you have set up has done such an abysmal job in dealing with the public? All of those people in Toronto who regularly find transportation across the 407 have to think this is an abysmal thing you're doing.

I look at the next one, the Ontario Heritage Act, and I want to commend you for this one. This is a change that I actually commend you for. It gives a 40% tax break for the conservation easement. I commend you for it because it is better than what was there before. I don't think you've gone far enough—I have proposed a fund for a dynamic downtown in my own little urban vision—but I want to tell you that at least you are looking at what heritage properties need, and heritage properties need some money. What you have proposed here on the fifth thing—I've singled it out not to tell you that there's something wrong with it. It doesn't go far enough, but at least it's better than what it is now, and you should take a few bows for that one.

Number 6 is the immunization of school pupils. You have done a mandatory immunization of school pupils, which is excellent, but you have not included the disease of meningitis. Every year in this province children die of meningitis. If you are going to have a mandatory immunization of school pupils, which is a good thing, then please include something that actually kills them, because we need to protect those children, those young adults, from meningitis. If you are going to immunize them, please let us immunize them against diseases that can kill them, and meningitis is the one that stands out like a sore thumb. If your omnibus bill is going to include everything please let it include something that is going to save lives.

You talk about longer trucks and this one really got me, number 7. Section 25 of your bill talks about allowing for longer trucks. Those of us who drive on the 401, the 404, the 409, the 407 and all those 400 highways and all those hundreds of other highways across Ontario know about the big, long trucks. They're not nine-wheelers, they're not 12-wheelers, they're not 15-wheelers, they are enormous, and section 25 allows for even longer trucks. I for one want to tell you that I am opposed; so is an organization called CRASH, which looks at these big

trucks. Big trucks have difficulty manoeuvring, particularly on some of our smaller roads and highways. They have difficulty in changing lanes on our 400 series. I want to tell you that there has been a considerable problem experienced in this province over a number of years with crash fatalities with big trucks. Before we move into the area of great big trucks on our highways, please reconsider section 25 in this omnibus bill because it is going to allow for larger and longer and bigger and more weighted trucks with more wheels and more potential for problems. Surely the government has to rethink this and not slide this through in an omnibus bill.

The last one, number 8, is the review of the wage loss benefits. This may seem rather minor to most people, but there it is. It's the review of the wage loss benefits, and I'll tell you that this does not go near far enough for people who have sustained huge injuries in the workforce: people who have been sucked into machines, who have lost limbs, people who have been subjected to electric volts who have lost limbs, people who have suffered all manner of illness in their workplaces. This does not recognize that serious illnesses will recur. If somebody suffers an injury and for all the world in a year or two they appear to have been rehabilitated, say, to work on a computer instead of working in a factory or they've taken some education or they have been rehabilitated to the extent that they can use one hand with some kind of compression or other tool, and the world says, "OK, you've been rehabilitated and you're back to work and we've done the best," the reality is that many injuries over time will cause further problems for the individual. The review of the wage loss benefits does not recognize this. There is nothing in this omnibus bill that will allow the government or any government agency to reopen that and all I'm saying to you is that should be there.

I've only got a minute and a half left and I really want to tell you that the bill in itself—50 or 60 or 80, whatever there is provisions—is not a bad bill, but there are certain parts of this bill that any thinking person really needs to re-examine, not to vote for all of it. If you find any modicum of doubt that has come to you as a result of what I've said, if you've listened to anything that I've said, please examine these. If you're not satisfied that they're right, simply take them out of the bill. I will be more than happy, as I'm sure most of the other government members will be, to vote for the bill as it's structured without these things in it.

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If you insist that they go ahead, then the opposition will do unfortunately what we've always had to do in the past. We will vote against the bill, not because the majority of the bill isn't a good bill, as this one is, but the reality is that there are certain things that we think need to be improved; just as that day, and I'll come back to it, I had to vote against Durham College, although with all my heart I thought that it was the right initiative this government had taken to establish a university in the Oshawa area, to establish a new campus to get young adults into the educational forum. It was an exciting and

vibrant possibility that I stared right in the face and ended up having to stand up with the noes because it was lumped in with the budget bill. Don't do the same thing here. Take out the offending sections. Let us all vote for what is good and please examine those things that have been hastily put through. I think you can do a lot better.

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

Mr Gill: It was interesting to listen to the member from Beaches-East York who talked about every 400 series highway there is and needless to say he's quite afraid to be on any of the highways. He talked about the short trucks, the long trucks and all kinds of trucks. I know in the past he's been quite concerned, and I am too, with the gridlock on the highways and roads, and 410 is one of the examples. I'm quite concerned.

At the same time, it's part of progress as the economy progresses and more and more people are moving into these ridings like Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale. It does create a bit of a backlog and people plan around it. They're happy to have more jobs and they're happy to be part of the progress. I've mentioned before there was somebody in BC—it was part of the Maclean's editorial, I believe—who moved away from the big cities into the so-called calm of Kelowna or whatever. Then he realized that's not what he wanted. He said, "The sound of traffic is the sound of progress." So he was quite happy to move back.

The member opposite spoke a lot about what is not in the bill. He did not speak much about what's in the bill, but what's not in the bill. He talked about meningitis; perhaps it should be. I'm not saying this bill has everything. Already you people are saying it's omnibus and it's got too many things, but I do agree there are many more things that we need to address. There is more to be done, as the member from Durham said earlier. We are here as the government to be able to address those concerns of the taxpayers to have a lesser government, to have a more efficient government.

Mr Bradley: I actually thought the member for Beaches-East York talked about what was in the bill. In fact, he brought to light something I hadn't seen in the bill in my first read of it, and that was the provision dealing with information on vacation pay. That is absolutely bizarre that people could not go to an employer and say, "How many days of vacation do I have left?" I was not aware until the member rose in the House that that was part of the bill, and surely that's something the government would change. A moderate such as Ted Arnott would never want to see something like this left in a bill of that kind.

The Highway 407 change gives yet another hammer to a corporation that is gouging the people of the province of Ontario over and over again on a daily basis. If you want to talk about calls to constituency offices, outside of the horrendous hydro bills that they're getting at the present time, outside of the huge and difficult doctor shortage that exists in the province and certainly in Niagara, Highway 407 is the favourite. I've had people I

know who are good life-long Tories phone with very uncomplimentary messages about Highway 407. So to give this corporation yet another chance to hammer people, it seems to me, is not appropriate. It's already taking its share of the money from people. It doesn't respond as quickly and efficiently as it should and it is, as I say, for many people an extremely difficult circumstance.

Also, allowing the longer trucks in the province, particularly in the wintertime; people who are seeing these trucks pass them, it's enough, to keep the slush off your windows with the trucks at the present time going by at a speed they shouldn't be going and splashing slush all over your window, without the truck having to be several feet longer at this time.

So I thought the member identified many weaknesses in the bill and should be commended for it.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): First of all, let me apologize for not having a suit on. I just got off a plane from Timmins. Trying to get from Timmins to here took about eight hours today, with mechanical stops and everything else that happened.

But anyway, I just want to say I listened to the member for Beaches-East York who spoke to this, and I thought, like the member for St Catharines did, that he actually spoke to the bill. I thought it interesting that the only Tory who got up and spoke said, "Oh, he didn't speak to the bill." I just say to the Tory member, read your own bill and you'll figure out he was talking to the bill in the first place.

I thought he really got to the crux of the problem because part of the problem we have in this Legislature is that the committee process doesn't work. When the committee process doesn't work, it means you don't have the ability to fix sections of the bill that the member had pointed out. Let's just think this out a little bit and let's just dream a bit. Let's just blue-sky.

Imagine if we had a committee process in this assembly that actually worked, a committee process by which members who have concerns about particular issues could go to committee, that people would be allowed to present on the bill, that there would be some opportunity to discuss and debate why an amendment is needed and actually be able to amend it. Imagine what that would do. It would be like Utopia in Parliament. Members of the opposition would be able to support a great number of government bills if only we could amend them.

We understand there are certain bills that the government doesn't want to amend, and neither would I: a budget bill, a major initiative on the part of the government. Those are ideological and we understand that. Bills like this are basically housekeeping bills, as we see them, but the government throws everything in it and always manages to throw things in it that you can't support because it's nuts, like you can only go to your employer once in a year and ask for holidays. What's the

matter with you guys? Are you drinking the Kool-Aid over there as well? I don't know what the heck you guys are up to.

Another part of the bill says we're going to give the 407 the ability to take away people's driver's licence if they don't pay their toll. We know the problem is that the 407 and the whole toll issue, which we'll get into at another time, is broken. So certainly we're not going to vote for the bill in its present state.

The Deputy Speaker: One further spot left. Hearing none, then back to the member for Beaches-East York for an up-to-two-minute response.

Mr Prue: I would like to thank the members for Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale, St Catharines and Timmins-James Bay for their constructive comments.

Just to deal with each one of them in turn, the member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale talked about gridlock and people being happy with gridlock. I want to tell you, this is the first time in my long career in municipal and now provincial politics that I have ever heard anyone talk favourably about gridlock. Everywhere I have travelled in this province, everywhere I have gone in a major urban area, everywhere in the greater Toronto area, speaking with mayors—I once was a mayor on the greater Toronto area council with Hazel McCallion and the mayors from all of the 27 municipalities, as we then were—the number one problem was always gridlock. People talked about ways of improving the highways to get them moving, to keep them going.

One of the ways of getting the highways moving again—I have heard this most recently, surprisingly, of all places, coming out of Ottawa—is to start talking about having commercial transportation use alternative routes. Maybe commercial transportation could use the 407 and leave the 401, as an example, free for non-commercial vehicles. People are starting to talk a whole range of things.

I want to thank the member for St Catharines, who talked about the 407. It is one of my bugaboos. I think of all the corporations that impact on people in the GTA, this is the one that is the most maligned and perhaps the most understood—not misunderstood. What they are doing is not in the best interests of the customers they are serving. It is certainly time for this government to rein them in and certainly time for them to act professionally and perhaps, need I say it, act like a public corporation in the public interest instead of in their own interests.

Last but not least, the member for Timmins-James Bay is absolutely right. We need a better committee system where we can actually make changes to good bills to make them better.

The Deputy Speaker: It now being so close to 9:30 of the clock, this House will stand adjourned until Tuesday, October 22 at 1:30.

The House adjourned at 2129.

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Perth-Middlesex	Johnson, Bert (PC)	Vaughan-King-Aurora	Sorbara, Greg (L)
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Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge	Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet (PC) Minister of Finance / ministre des Finances	Whitby-Ajax	Flaherty, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation / ministre de l'Entreprise, des Débouchés et de l'Innovation
Prince Edward-Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Willowdale	Young, Hon / L'hon David (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	Conway, Sean G. (L)	Windsor West / -Ouest	Pupatello, Sandra (L)
Sarnia-Lambton	Di Cocco, Caroline (L)	Windsor-St Clair	Duncan, Dwight (L)
Sault Ste Marie	Martin, Tony (ND)	York Centre / -Centre	Kwinter, Monte (L)
		York North / -Nord	Munro, Julia (PC)
		York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
		York West / -Ouest	Sergio, Mario (L)

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Alvin Curling
Gilles Bisson, Ted Chudleigh, Alvin Curling,
Gerard Kennedy, Frank Mazzilli, Norm Miller,
John R. O'Toole, Steve Peters
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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

Chair / Président: Marcel Beaubien
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Ted Arnott
Ted Arnott, Marcel Beaubien,
David Christopherson, Monte Kwinter,
John O'Toole, Gerry Phillips,
Rob Sampson, Joseph Spina
Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

General government / Affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Président: Steve Gilchrist
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Norm Miller
Marilyn Churley, Mike Colle,
Garfield Dunlop, Steve Gilchrist, Dave Levac,
Norm Miller, R. Gary Stewart, Wayne Wettlaufer
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Président: James J. Bradley
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Michael Gravelle
James J. Bradley, Leona Dombrowsky, Michael Gravelle,
Bert Johnson, Tony Martin, Frank Mazzilli,
Wayne Wettlaufer, Bob Wood
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

Justice and Social Policy / Justice et affaires sociales

Chair / Présidente: Toby Barrett
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: AL McDonald
Toby Barrett, Marcel Beaubien, Michael Bryant,
Garry J. Guzzo, Ernie Hardeman,
Peter Kormos, AL McDonald, Lyn McLeod
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative

Chair / Présidente: Margaret Marland
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Julia Munro
Caroline Di Cocco, Jean-Marc Lalonde,
Margaret Marland, Bart Maves,
Julia Munro, Marilyn Mushinski,
Michael Prue, Joseph N. Tascona
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

Public accounts / Comptes publics

Chair / Président: John Gerretsen
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Bruce Crozier
Bruce Crozier, John Gerretsen,
Steve Gilchrist, Raminder Gill,
John Hastings, Shelley Martel,
AL McDonald, Richard Patten,
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**Regulations and private bills /
Règlements et projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Rosario Marchese
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Garfield Dunlop
Gilles Bisson, Claudette Boyer, Garfield Dunlop,
Raminder Gill, Pat Hoy, Morley Kells, Rosario Marchese, Ted
McMeekin, Bill Murdoch, Wayne Wettlaufer
Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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