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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 30 May 2001

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Mercredi 30 mai 2001

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Chair: James J. Bradley
Clerk: Donna Bryce

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT AGENCIESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES
ORGANISMES GOUVERNEMENTAUX

Wednesday 30 May 2001

Mercredi 30 mai 2001

The committee met at 1005 in room 228.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

The Vice-Chair (Mr Bruce Crozier): We mustn't be tardy here. Apparently the first selection is not here. We've got a couple of subcommittee reports to deal with, and then there is an issue the clerk would like to bring to us about the timing on some of the selections we've made.

Mr Bob Wood (London West): I might say that apparently our second person is here. We do have someone to interview.

The Vice-Chair: OK. We will start with the report of the subcommittee on committee business dated Thursday, May 17, 2001.

Mr Wood: I move its adoption.

The Vice-Chair: It has been moved. Any discussion? All those in favour? Carried.

Next is the report of the subcommittee on committee business dated Thursday, May 24, 2001.

Mr Wood: I move its adoption.

The Vice-Chair: Adoption has been moved. Any discussion? All those in favour? Carried. Thank you.

Now we are at the point where the clerk is going to advise us of some timing matters.

Clerk pro tem (Ms Tonia Grannum): From the May 4 certificate we still have 11 people outstanding to be scheduled. That deadline runs out June 3. We would need an extension if the committee wishes to hear from any more people on that certificate. If that certificate receives the extension, then the people selected from the May 11 certificate will also need an extension because their certificate runs out June 10.

Mr Wood: I will ask for unanimous consent that the time allocated for review of everybody who hasn't yet been reviewed be extended by seven days.

Clerk pro tem: For each respective certificate.

Mr Wood: Everybody.

The Vice-Chair: It has been moved. You are asking for unanimous consent.

Mr Wood: Yes, I ask for unanimous consent.

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): Could I just ask for clarification? When you say extended by seven days, everyone will receive a seven-day extension. It's not that the entire group is extended to a particular date.

Mr Wood: That's what I'm saying. Whatever their date is now, everybody is extended seven days.

Clerk pro tem: So the June 10 certificate will now be June 17 and the one that runs out June 3 will be June 10.

The Vice-Chair: Further discussion? Do we have unanimous consent on that?

Mrs Dombrowsky: Why seven days and not 14?

Mr Wood: We are prepared to extend by seven because we had the constituency week.

Mrs Dombrowsky: I'm sorry?

Mr Wood: That's the only extension we're prepared to agree to.

The Vice-Chair: Because constituency week fell in there, we are extending seven days. If unanimous consent is not received, then we lose the May 4 certificate, unless there is another motion. Do I have unanimous consent? We have unanimous consent.

INTENDED APPOINTMENTS

PAWANJIT GOSAL

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Pawanjit Gosal, intended appointee as member, council of the College of Midwives of Ontario.

The Vice-Chair: Our first intended appointee is Ms Gosal. Would you come and have a place at the desk and make yourself comfortable. Perhaps you could assist the Chair by repeating your name.

Mrs Pawanjit Gosal: Pawanjit Gosal. Exactly as it is spelled.

The Vice-Chair: Thank you, and welcome. I don't know whether you're familiar with the procedure, but you can make opening remarks if you wish. That would be part of the government's time. Then each of the parties is given 10 minutes to ask questions, have a conversation with you, whatever they choose.

Mrs Gosal: Thank you for inviting me to appear before you today. As you know, my name is Pawanjit Gosal and I am seeking a position on the council of the College of Midwives. I come from a country where midwifery is common practice. In fact, I was delivered by a midwife.

I have lived in Brampton for the last 18 years with my husband and three children: Jasmine, Sanjot and Priya.

I understand that I am sitting on the council of the College of Midwives representing the people of Ontario. Although I know little about the College of Midwives, I

do know that if appointed to this board I will be responsible for regulating the profession and making sure that individuals have access to services that are provided by competent health care professionals.

I look forward to the training that will be provided to me and look forward to learning about the acts, regulations and bylaws of the college. If appointed to this position, I will do my best to represent the people of Ontario. Thank you and I look forward to your questions.

The Vice-Chair: We will start with the official opposition.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Good morning, Ms Gosal. I have to say that I think it would be a most interesting experience to participate on this sort of governing body, with this particular college. I reviewed your resumé and you have some extensive experience in the business field. What would have attracted you to this appointment?

Mrs Gosal: Like I said, I was born by a midwife and I have three kids of my own. I've always been interested in knowing more about the profession. I think that because I went through three pregnancies, I know what pregnant women need and what kind of sensitivity they require.

Mrs Dombrowsky: I'm a mother of four, so I think I can identify with some of those sentiments. How were you aware that the college existed? I'm a mother of four and I have to say I didn't really appreciate, until I did the background for this, that there was a college. Were you invited to submit an application?

Mrs Gosal: Actually I sent in a resumé to the Ministry of Health. From there, I got a call asking if I would be interested in sitting on the board.

Mrs Dombrowsky: I see. Have you had an opportunity to review any background at all about the role and the work of the college and the members?

Mrs Gosal: All I know is that the college has started to regulate the profession to make sure that the individual who needs help is helped by a competent professional. I look forward to further training, as I indicated in my opening statement.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Would you be familiar with the terminology of artificial barriers for those individuals who would be practising the profession of midwifery? In Ontario there certainly has been put forward the argument that there are artificial barriers in terms of enabling them to practise fully or to offer a full range of services in a way that is not sometimes problematic for the patient and also for the professional. There's a requirement that if in a delivery, for example, the patient would be in need of an epidural, they have to call in a doctor so that they can call in another professional to administer the epidural. The midwife, I believe, should professionally be in a position to determine whether a mom would need—

Mrs Gosal: Yes, I do understand. The midwife has to attend four years of college and attend about 60 births before she can practise on her own. But, as I said, I hope to learn more about it.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Do you see yourself as an individual who would advocate for the removal of those kinds of barriers?

Mrs Gosal: I feel if somebody is going to practise in this profession, they should be fully qualified for it.

Mrs Dombrowsky: I believe that as well, but some of the regulations around the profession can make that more of a challenge. I was just asking you if you would see yourself as advocating for removing some of those blocks or challenges.

Mrs Gosal: As I said, I'm not really familiar with the whole concept of it, but I would like to say that I would like to learn more about it in my training, and then from there I would go.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Do you think that the profession of midwifery has a larger role to play in the health care system in our province?

Mrs Gosal: I think so, since they are less expensive to get training and there would be more of a one-to-one consultation, and they would be more sensitive to the need of the patient.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Yes. I found it interesting when I did my research that statistics would prove that there is a lower percentage of postpartum complications—

Mrs Gosal: That's right.

Mrs Dombrowsky: —when a woman had the services of a midwife.

Are you affiliated with any political party?

Mrs Gosal: No, I am not.

Mrs Dombrowsky: You're not. I see. Very good. Well, good luck, and thank you very much for your time.

Those will be all my questions.

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): Thanks for coming this morning. Certainly this appointment is a very important one, in my view, as we look at the evolution of how we deliver health care in the province and when we consider some of the challenges that confront us. I'm always surprised when a profession that is as old as this one is finds itself in fill-in, in limbo, so to speak, where allowing it to actually do its full job is concerned.

When the government got its head around finally moving forward the Regulated Health Professions Act, and recognized midwifery as a profession that needed to be given room to grow but, on the other hand, to be regulated so it continues to be safe and people who access that service can feel confident that the people in it are professional and trained and experienced, the board that you're being appointed to, or asking to be appointed to, was established and it was decided across the board that it would be good to have people on these boards who aren't necessarily directly related or connected by way of a profession.

I note by your resumé and the comments you made in your introduction that you don't have a whole lot of experience, knowledge or understanding of the profession, but you were delivered by a midwife.

Mrs Gosal: Right, and, as I indicated, I would like to say that I look forward to the further training. I look forward to the training I will be provided.

Mr Martin: Other than that, is there any other particular interest that you have or knowledge or experience

that you bring to the table? You wrote to the ministry. They said, "Would you be interested in this one?"

Mrs Gosal: Yes.

Mr Martin: Did they present any other opportunities?

Mrs Gosal: No, they did not.

Mr Martin: This was the only one?

Mrs Gosal: This was the only one, yes.

Mr Martin: And you thought this would be something that you would—

Mrs Gosal: Yes. Like I said, I have been always interested in the profession. I came from India, and midwifery is a common practice there, so it's not like this is the first time I've heard about it.

1020

Mr Martin: Then you would be of the opinion that midwifery should actually have more room?

Mrs Gosal: I think so.

Mr Martin: What's your understanding of the role of the council that you're to be appointed to?

Mrs Gosal: I thought I already answered that question, but like I said, the councils are responsible for regulating the profession and making sure that that person is well-qualified in the field. I hope I get further training in my appointment to know more about the position.

Mr Martin: You'll understand that there are some real challenges out there today across the province, particularly where access to doctors is concerned. One of the things doctors do, certainly up in my part of the country, is in the area of obstetrics and delivering babies. There was a sense that if we allowed professions such as midwifery and nurse practitioners more room to actually practise what they're trained to do, that would take some of the pressure off. I note in some of the material that we were given here in preparing for today that an expert panel says, in looking at the whole area of midwifery and how it fits in the regulated health professions sphere, "Approximately 30% of midwife deliveries require some degree of intervention on the part of an obstetrician-gynaecologist. According to anecdotal reports, the interventions are often required for administrative rather than clinical reasons. For example, some hospitals place arbitrary limits on the number of midwives with hospital privileges or on the number of deliveries midwives can do. Because midwives are not allowed to consult directly with"—this is a big long word here; I can't get my teeth around it—"anaesthesiologists ..." I guess—

Mrs Gosal: Yes, anaesthetists.

Mr Martin: Anyway, I think you know it's the person who gives the drugs that put people out. You know the one—the one you last see before you go to sleep.

The Vice-Chair: Mr Martin, I think it's anaesthesiologist, and I don't have it in front of me.

Mr Wood: That's why you're the Chair.

Mr Martin: That's right. That's why we give him the good jobs. I won't even try it again.

Anyway, "... a midwife's patient who needs an epidural must be referred to a physician." And I can say "epidural," because my wife had four kids and I think she

had a couple of those. "If these artificial barriers were removed, midwives would be able to perform a larger proportion of unassisted low risk deliveries, thereby relieving the pressure on obstetricians." Do you have any comment on that?

Mrs Gosal: I think if the person is qualified to know when the patient needs some sort of drug to help them out with the pain, they should be able to make that decision.

Mr Martin: Do you think as a body governing that particular profession, you would or should have any influence in terms of, for example, hospitals giving more opportunity to midwives to actually have privileges and come in and practise their profession?

Mrs Gosal: I think so. I think that would be a big help to the doctors and, as I said, to the pregnant women to get more of a personal touch when they are going through the pregnancy than just going to the physician once a month and getting a routine checkup.

Mr Martin: Do you have any thoughts on how this college that you're going to be appointed to could or should interact with, for example, the college of physicians to try and ease some of the anxiety or concern there that midwives may be in fact taking over some of the traditional roles of the doctor?

Mrs Gosal: I think it's already being done. Like I said, I don't know very much about it, but if there is room for improvement, I think it should be done.

Mr Martin: You obviously see the further development of midwifery as an answer to some of the shortages of professionals.

Mrs Gosal: I think so, yes.

The Vice-Chair: Thank you, Mr Martin. We then move to the government side.

Mr Frank Mazzilli (London-Fanshawe): Thank you very much for appearing. Something you said in one of your answers certainly interested me. You said you wanted to be appointed to this board to represent the people of Ontario and certainly people who are looking for these types of services. You said that it's because you have an interest in family and in children and so on. Can you just repeat that for the record again, please—your answer as to who you want to represent on this board?

Mrs Gosal: I would like to represent the pregnant women of Ontario because, like I said, I've been through the experience of being pregnant three times and I know what kind of services would be very useful to the pregnant person.

Mr Mazzilli: That's my only question, thank you.

The Vice-Chair: Any other government members?

Mr Wood: We will waive the balance of our time.

The Vice-Chair: Thank you, Mr Wood, and I want to thank you very much for appearing today. I hope you've enjoyed this.

Mrs Gosal: I did, even though I was very nervous.

Mrs Dombrowsky: You did very well.

Mrs Gosal: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair: We wish you well. We will deal with concurrence at the end of the session this morning.

IAN TURNBULL

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Ian Turnbull, intended appointee as chair, Muskoka-Parry Sound Early Years Steering Committee.

The Chair (Mr James Bradley): Thank you to the Vice-Chair for his kindness. I was with the Minister of the Environment a short time ago—not at her invitation, I should tell the government members, but I was with her nevertheless.

The next is an intended appointee as chair of the Early Years Steering Committee of the Muskoka-Parry Sound health unit, Mr Ian Turnbull. As you've probably already heard, you have an opportunity to make an initial statement, should you see fit, and then the questioning is up to 15 minutes from each of the political parties represented on the committee. Welcome, sir.

Mr Ian Turnbull: Thank you, Mr Chair and committee members. I do have an opening statement.

I appreciate the opportunity to meet with you and discuss my nomination to serve as chair of the Muskoka-Parry Sound Early Years Steering Committee. When I applied to serve on the committee, my intent was to represent Muskoka's interests, and it was only last week that I learned that I had been nominated as chair of the committee. I look forward to the challenge since I believe that in large rural areas like Muskoka-Parry Sound, the development of effective citizen-serving systems requires a critical mass somewhat greater than each of the parts.

A challenge unique to this steering committee will be ensuring equitable consideration of early years needs in all of the communities of the two districts. I say that because while the two districts are neighbours, they're really very different. Muskoka has a larger population and three major towns, and Parry Sound has a smaller population and a larger geographical area. Our economies are similar but our governance systems are very different, with a regional government in place in Muskoka for over three decades. I make these points up front to simply emphasize that I acknowledge the different character and needs of the two districts, and I would pledge that in my role as chair I would strive to constructively meld the interests of the two districts into a whole.

My track record demonstrates some success in community capacity building. To a large extent, I believe that the aim of early years initiatives in the Ontario government is just that—to build community capacity in development of a seamless child-serving system. Recommendation 3 of the Early Years Study recommended that a local authority be required to administer integrated early child development and parenting programs. I believe that the design of the early years process will achieve that objective.

Three decades of experience in my work and my community have equipped me, I think, to serve the steering committee effectively. I submitted biographical information earlier, and I'm just going to touch on some salient points.

I joined the district of Muskoka quite a long time ago, in 1971, and I've been associated with community services programs since that date. In 1981, I was appointed administrator of the home for the aged, a long-term-care facility, and retained responsibility at that time for the social services department.

I would consider this moment in my career to be the most exciting, or one of the more exciting and challenging moments, and that's because I have some significant responsibilities which I'm very much enjoying. I am charged with developing our district municipality's role as child care system manager.

1030

We are in the midst of transferring social housing system responsibility from Ontario to Muskoka. We are facilitating ways and means of reducing homelessness in Muskoka, we are implementing Ontario Works program initiatives and we are expanding and replacing our long-term-care facility. We were delighted to receive news last week that we have the opportunity to expand it. It was great news.

In other aspects of life, I have a demonstrated record of community involvement, having served on the boards of the Muskoka Lakes Association, the Muskoka Lakes Museum, the Muskoka Heritage Foundation and the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association.

I realized on the way down that I left out one of the organizations which is close to my heart, and that's the Muskoka Steamship and Historical Society. I realized that by coming here today, I was missing an important event. This morning the hull of the second ship of the fleet was being launched by crane in Muskoka Bay in Gravenhurst. I've been quite involved in that and, darn it, I missed it. But it is delightful to be here anyhow.

There has never been a more critical time than now to align Muskoka-Parry Sound's efforts with the Early Years vision. Our service delivery organizations have only recently assumed child care system management responsibilities. In the process, we have met many children's services stakeholders and sense that all are ready to move toward a seamless child-serving system. Ironically, we are at a balance point in developing that system. With many initiatives underway at the community level, we either will move now to ensure a collaborative approach or risk developing in silos.

The cumulative impact of my experience has aligned my values with those articulated in the Early Years Study. I would like now to apply my energy and influence to seeing those values reflected in Muskoka-Parry Sound's response to the challenge. I believe I can assist in mobilizing the community, given the scope of my duties and my relationship with the communities of both Muskoka and Parry Sound. I will work to bring the interests of all stakeholders, especially parents, to the process.

I will close by saying that mobilizing the community around the Early Years vision and championing early child development is for me a perfect fit with vocational

and personal goals. I look forward to the challenge and your questions.

The Chair: Thank you very much, sir. We begin our questioning with the third party.

Mr Martin: Thank you for coming this morning. It is indeed if not exciting, a very challenging time, I would think, to be part of public life of this province. I note from looking at your resumé that you are the commissioner of community social services for the area. You don't see that, along with your being chair of this Early Years committee, as any kind of conflict of interest? There's no conflict there for you?

Mr Turnbull: I could perceive a potential conflict of interest in the event that I allowed better judgment to get in the way and I started advocating particularly for investment of funds in an area that I had responsibility for. I can only respond by saying that I think my record shows I don't do that, and I would not be doing that in this role.

Mr Martin: My biggest concern, and I've been stating it here over the last few months as we interviewed numerous people being appointed to these committees across the province, is that we have a problem in Ontario right now under the aegis of child poverty.

In 1989 the federal government, the Legislature, passed a resolution unanimously that we would do away with child poverty by the year 2000. It seems that back then one in 10 children was in poverty. Now, if you look at statistics that are put out by groups that are very sincerely looking at this, one of them being the Campaign 2000 organization, the statistics are telling us that actually one in 5 children now lives in poverty.

Certainly the kinds of programs that are being imagined under the aegis of this body that you're looking for appointment to as chair would be very directly important in the lives of a whole lot of families. I was into Huntsville about a month ago doing a people's parliament on poverty and heard from about 50 people over the course of an afternoon that Muskoka is an area that struggles. The income levels are not really high—a lot of service sector work in the area, a lot of low-income families and lots of challenges. What's your view of all that, given that you're the commissioner? Is there a lot of poverty in Muskoka?

Mr Turnbull: Yes. It depends on how one wants to characterize a lot. There is no question that statistically our average incomes are lower. We note that, I think it was yesterday or the day before, there was an article in Macleans and the figure is misrepresented. It is off. We don't know where they got it from but we won't argue about that.

There is no question that the average income in Muskoka is lower than in many areas of the province. That is a direct result, in our view, from the service system side, if you will, of the nature of employment and the nature of wages which are paid. That has contributed, of course, in many ways to affordability issues around housing, which we're acutely aware of because of our efforts to address homelessness.

I suppose my response would be that we're very aware of the average level of income. We have done in our area what we can to support individuals who have a low income so they can access improved employment through training etc. We have removed completely, I would say—well, no, we can't remove it completely. We have no wait list for child care. We think that's a critical step, for example, so there is not any wait list for access to subsidized child care in Muskoka, and that is a very conscious policy decision, supported by Muskoka district council, to provide access to individuals able to work to improve themselves.

Through a range of programs, what we're attempting to do is to develop the multifaceted support system that's out there for all families, to address that issue which we believe is there. Ironically, the most important thing that can be done is something which is sort of aligned with it but beside my area of endeavour, and that's economic development. That's probably the long-term way in which we're going to improve the average incomes and therefore the well-being of our people.

Mr Martin: Are you aware of the Early Years Study?

Mr Turnbull: Yes, I am.

Mr Martin: In there it says, "People involved in community initiatives spoke often" in meetings leading up to the release of that study "of having to deal with the basic needs of families first. A family who does not have a place to live is not going to be able to provide a stable home environment for the children. This message was reinforced by provincial children's services organizations who spoke of their member agencies seeing more children who are going hungry, children who have to be taken into the care of children's aid because the family is homeless, more family stress and more mothers with children in shelters for the victims of family violence.

"The reduction in 1995 in social assistance benefits has probably increased the number of children below the low-income cut-off point. Homelessness is affecting some families and children in some centres because individuals cannot afford market rents and there are waiting lists for subsidized housing and there have been no not-for-profit housing initiatives in this province since 1995. We're not in a position to judge the scale of need in this sector, but these issues clearly contribute to some of the difficulties of some families at the lower end of the socio-economic scale."

What they're saying here is that some of the initiatives of the government that's in place today, such as the reduction in the level of income for people on Ontario Works and the fact that there hasn't been any investment in affordable housing for the last six or seven years—what would be your view of that? And if you discovered in Muskoka that that in fact was the case, would you be encouraging your group to lobby government to change those initiatives?

Mr Turnbull: I don't know if we would be encouraging, for example, development of affordable housing through the Early Years Steering Committee unless there was no action being taken by local communities. I say

that because we have been, through the organization I work with, very active in advocating very strongly steps which we believe will lead to increasing the supply of affordable housing. I can detail those, but we've done a series of things in addressing homelessness to alleviate the situation people in Muskoka face.

Also, and equally important, we're taking quick steps to find out what we need to do to expand the supply of affordable housing. If local governments were not taking on that responsibility, and I believe that's where it's assigned, then through Early Years certainly we'd be encouraging that in a way that was appropriate. But I've seen the Early Years, and the developing of a child-serving system. While it would not exclude an issue like homelessness, I think it is aiming primarily at the support systems that are in place for children one to six, in the broad perspective, not just one particular area.

Homelessness, housing in itself, income support issues clearly have a home in municipal governments and the responsibility there under the direction of the provincial government. We have encouraged those groups to take forward those responsibilities.

1040

There is no question that all the problems you have identified are significant. I think my role, in both my job and as chair of this committee, is to advocate and urge action to do the job well through those who have responsibility for addressing those needs locally.

Mr Martin: If you found out that in the shifting of responsibility—that obviously has happened to municipalities in a lot of those areas—the money didn't come as well and that in fact the municipality and local governments were struggling to now pay for a whole array of things that they weren't expected to pay for before and that the victims of all of that were low-income families and their children, would you be then willing to send a message to the provincial government that they're not carrying out their responsibility as I believe the people of Ontario expect?

Mr Turnbull: The answer is: I would not be willing to personally send that message. I would be very willing to recommend that message to a council that I was accountable to. If the Early Years Steering Committee were of a mind in the majority that such a message should be sent, then I would support sending that message. But, no, I'm not going to stand up as an individual, without that kind of authority in the committee, from the balance, and send such a message.

I'm going to try and keep clear here my job and the Early Years. In my job, what I will do is identify with data what a situation is locally and make a recommendation through a standing committee to a council. Should it be that, in the majority opinion of those individuals, a recommendation should go forward, they make the recommendation; I simply supply the information and perhaps some of the rationale behind that recommendation. In respect to the Early Years committee, should it be that our findings, our research and our mandate would lead us to making such a recommendation, I'm sure we would do that.

Mr Martin: One other phenomenon that I discovered over the last number of months, as I delved more deeply into the whole area of poverty and how it affects families, is the clawback of the national child tax benefit, which you're probably fairly familiar with because some of that money is used, 20% of the holdback is used, by municipalities to provide some good services in areas.

The bigger question and issue for me is, the federal government launched that initiative, the supplement, to help low-income families. It turns out that they meant low-income families who had jobs. There are still a significant number of low-income families with children who don't have jobs for various legitimate reasons in many instances, and they're losing that money. They get the cheque from the federal government, as you know, in the middle of the month; at the end of the month it's reduced from their Ontario Works or Ontarians with disabilities work program cheque that goes out to them. It is sometimes fairly significant, particularly if a family has two or three children. It is, on average—what?—\$80 per child per month and can add up to a couple of hundred dollars, which buys a lot of bread and milk or could go a long way to providing some clothing.

What's your view? Is that an appropriate vehicle to be using? I'm trying to understand why you would take that money away from those very vulnerable and at-risk families. The only thing I can come up with is that it is used as an incentive, a bit of a stick to force those folks into more gainful employment. Do you see it as an appropriate tool to be using?

Mr Turnbull: I'm really not able to comment on the appropriateness of the tool, because the decision was made by policy-makers and other levels of government beyond us. What I can comment on is—and I've had to answer this question many times to local councillors—I'm not in a position, neither do I want to take a position which says, "Yes, senior government has made a good decision," or, "They made a bad decision." They made a decision; that is their right.

I look at the opportunity that we have to work with that decision locally to do good things. We believe that through the reinvestments we've been able to make through those savings that we've in fact been able to help a great number of individuals who may have lost that from social assistance. But we've been able to invest those municipal tax savings we think very effectively in developing programs to address child poverty.

I really am unwilling to comment on a policy decision at a senior level either by the provincial or federal government, but I am quite willing to say that locally the reinvestment in Muskoka has done some very good things in developing the system in a sustainable way to address child poverty.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Martin. That completes your questions. Government?

Mr Wood: We will waive our time.

The Chair: The government has waived its time. The official opposition.

Mrs Dombrowsky: I read your resumé with some interest. There were a couple of statements you made in the body of the letter that piqued my curiosity. I would ask if you might be able to assist me with some clarification. You've indicated that you have been a child care system manager and the child care system responsibilities were intentionally listed first because they are the most challenging. You go on further in the paragraph to say that you quickly learned that the system was fragile yet essential. I was wondering if you might just explain why you would call it fragile.

Mr Turnbull: OK. To go back maybe just a couple of steps. We assumed child care system management in April 1999. Our first challenge was to learn, as extensively as we could, the nature of our responsibility. The way to do that, in our view, is to call the people together who have responsibility for delivering child care. We started a child care advisory group, and we frankly went through close to a year of monthly meetings where the individual providers of child care services across the board stood up and gave us the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats from their perspective as operators of the system.

Through all that we learned that for most of the providers—and they are businesses; some are non-profit and some are for-profit—of regulated child care, it is a rather thin edge. They sometimes resort to bake sales to pay the bills. They sometimes struggle with staffing. It's a difficult business to be in. You'll note that I have an interest in long-term care where there is a fairly heavy regulatory approach to standard of care delivered to vulnerable people. In my view, there are similarities in the child care system.

What we learned along the way through that process was a number of things. The businesses which are charged with delivering regulated child care have a tough go. We now have a role in providing subsidy to them through the wage subsidy program. We find that a great challenge, a huge challenge. We also find they sometimes struggle with exactly how it is they can measure the quality that they choose to deliver.

The statement around fragility is based primarily on market conditions, our ability to flow wage subsidy to them and their ability to maintain the bottom line, on a side that's black and not red, on an ongoing basis.

Mrs Dombrowsky: You also talked about the child care services in Parry Sound-Muskoka. You were very proud, and I commend you on the fact that you don't have a waiting list, because I'm sure you are aware that is not typical across the province. In many communities there are waiting lists of some thousands of families who are looking for that service. I'm interested to know the kind of service you offer in your community. Is it centre-based or home-based?

Mr Turnbull: Both.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Is it all regulated?

Mr Turnbull: No, because there's a large informal system. That's the only way I can answer that. There is a significant licensed system, of course, of centre-based care. There is an approved system of private home care.

Mrs Dombrowsky: But it's not regulated in home care.

Mr Turnbull: Yes, private home care is regulated through the Day Nurseries Act and through a large—well, we actually have two home care providers, but yes, there is an approved system. Then there is the informal system—

Mrs Dombrowsky: Yes.

Mr Turnbull:—and, of course, it is not regulated.

Mrs Dombrowsky: No. In the background material that you've received I'm sure you are familiar with the federal child development accord that was signed in September 2000—

Mr Turnbull: The national child's agenda? Yes.

Mrs Dombrowsky:—where \$2.1 billion was provided by the federal government to the provinces over the next five years. Ontario will receive \$844 million over the next five years. The first instalment was \$144 million. We learned on May 10, the day of the budget, that the \$30 million for the challenge fund will be part of those federal dollars. Do you have an opinion at all on the fact that the challenge fund was an initiative that was announced some months ago and the government committed \$30 million, and that with the introduction of federal money there were no additional dollars set aside to support the challenge fund initiative?

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Mr Turnbull: I am delighted to see, and from the community level that I work within we are very pleased to see, any government's investment in the child-serving system.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Would you be able to comment about whether you think there has been enough dedicated in this fund to assisting communities to meet the needs?

Mr Turnbull: We would always like to see more invested, always.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Do you have an opinion on the fact that with regard to those dollars that have come from the federal government that will support programs for children in the province of Ontario, no money was dedicated for child care?

Mr Turnbull: I'm aware of that, and that concerns us immensely, to be frank. What we are doing about that—we do what we can do with the tools that are available to us, and the tool that is available to us in Muskoka is called property tax. So I have recommended to council that we dramatically increase our share, and it is now about 43% of the fee subsidy, which is the way we're able to maintain no wait list. It's no longer an 80-20, and I'm exceedingly proud of the fact that council has accepted that. So we will look for revenue from wherever we can get it to build a system that serves children's needs in a way that's consistent with the principles you see in the Fraser Mustard report.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Do you have an opinion on the fact that the challenge fund is also contingent upon business or corporate participation within the community? Is there an issue for you that perhaps there would be a lack of universal service across the province, as some

communities would be much better resourced than others?

Mr Turnbull: I would have a concern about that because that could readily develop, I suppose, in that circumstance. On the other hand, I very much like the design principle. We've been working very much more closely with businesses over the last number of years for a whole variety of reasons, and we found this works very well. There's been much better buy-in to community health, community well-being, holistic communities etc, through involvement of the many stakeholders in the community. At one time, a decade or two ago, we were quite isolated in the work that we did. I think it's healthier to have them there. How it plays out depends how well we do things locally, I think.

Mrs Dombrowsky: So you would have those contacts; you would be known within those circles within your community?

Mr Turnbull: Yes. I want to stress that I'm known in Muskoka. Parry Sound is a good neighbour and I'm there a great deal, but it's about an hour and a half to the top of it from where I live.

Mrs Dombrowsky: You've also indicated—that this is in the body of your letter—that you believe in the values of the Early Years Study. I just wonder if you might articulate what your perception of those key values that were presented in that study would be. I think your answers to me this morning have demonstrated where your priorities are, but—

Mr Turnbull: Well, I have grown tired, if you will, over the years of attempting to deal effectively, assisting people to deal effectively, with problems which in fact were known at the beginning and weren't at the time, for whatever the reason, able to be solved. So we have found ourselves working with families and children where, in our view, had there been an earlier investment, had there been an earlier case management system to deal with things effectively, those individuals would not have needed to resort to our service.

This is an opportunity, and we learned a long time ago—and frankly, we embraced the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children program and we have done everything we can to get that ramped up as fast as we can because that's where it should be. I lament the fact there's not universal funding for it and there's not guaranteed funding for it, but we're doing our darndest to get it there because that is, for example, a key point.

Having said that, what we have found and what we've been struggling to do in Muskoka, in co-operation with the health unit, is just to build every last service we can at the earliest possible time. Frankly, we were doing a little bit of that before 1999, because we knew that that's where it lay. So it seems to me in Early Years, the values of being exceedingly effective on early assessment right up front, as soon as possible, and then getting those resources in there, which for us is a challenge because of large rural areas, and it is a challenge because a lot of the specialty services aren't as well developed as we would like them to be and there are wait lists and the like. But

bringing that together under a seamless system, as so much advocated, is what we like.

In order to advance that, we had Kathleen Guy in, quite independent of any of this activity. I don't know if you know Kathleen Guy. She's quite an advocate in the Ottawa area. We hosted a community forum on the need for really developing a child-serving system. The spark that it ignited in Muskoka was really quite exciting. An awful lot of people came out. That initiative is kind of stalled now that Early Years is on the way. We are going to see which is the one that the energy should consume.

Mrs Dombrowsky: I really like—

The Chair: Sorry. I have to cut you off now. That concludes your time.

Thank you very much, Mr Turnbull, for appearing before the committee.

LESLEY SHIMMIN

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Lesley Shimmin, intended appointee as member, Early Years Steering Committee of the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit.

The Chair: Our next intended appointee is as a member of the Early Years Steering Committee of the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit: Lesley Shimmin. Welcome to the committee. As you are probably aware, you have an opportunity if you wish—you may exercise this or not, whatever you wish—to make an initial statement.

Mrs Lesley Shimmin: Thank you, Mr Chairman, members of the committee. My name is Lesley Shimmin. I lived and worked in Toronto for about 30 years before retiring three years ago to Brighton, which is a very small town in Northumberland. I love the way of life there and find the people very enterprising and independent. I would like to work within the community a little more and assist in any possible way.

We were lucky enough, my husband and I, to have three children. Although it took me many years to realize this, we were lucky enough to have each one at a different level of achievement: a gifted child who needed a lot of extra stimulation; a sports-minded child who could have cared less about academic achievement; and a severely learning disabled child who needed physiotherapists to teach her how to crawl when she was a baby.

While they were young and growing, I worked with the local public school, with the Beavers, the Boy Scouts and the Girl Guides. I inaugurated and ran a gifted program in the local public school and volunteered for several years at a preschool nursery for mentally and physically handicapped tots.

I strongly believe that parenting skills are the keystone or determining factor in a child's development and that they are responsible mostly for the success in a child's life academically, socially and physically.

I look forward to learning what programs are available to enhance these parenting skills in Northumberland and

to assisting the committee to set in motion any that are lacking. I have time on my hands now that I am retired and I would dearly like to get back to these past interests. I believe my many years of researching, solving problems and dealing with people would be a positive asset for a position on the Early Years Steering Committee, and I'd be pleased to answer any questions that you might have.

The Chair: Thank you very much. We will begin with the government caucus.

Mr Wood: We will waive our time.

The Chair: Mr Wood says the government caucus will waive its time. We will move to the official opposition.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Good morning, Mrs Shimmin. I would ask if maybe you would explain how you have come to be appointed. I know that there were, in all communities across the province, ads in the paper. I also know that some people were recommended personally. How have you come to this point?

Mrs Shimmin: As you realize, I have many friends in the government. I talked with Doug Galt many times about some kind of volunteer position, because I didn't feel it would be appropriate that I get a paid position, but just in the neighbourhood, in the county and in his riding where I could assist people.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Just any position where you might be appointed?

Mrs Shimmin: Yes, any position. He sent me a lot of information, and this one appealed to me greatly.

Mrs Dombrowsky: OK. Very good. You've indicated he sent you a lot of information. With regard to the challenge fund and the challenge fund initiative, would you have received any information about the federal early childhood development accord?

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Mrs Shimmin: Not that I recall, but I believe they have given each province some money.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Actually quite a bit of money.

Mrs Shimmin: Quite a bit of money. I don't know how much. Especially with the idea that it be used in early childhood programs.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Yes, it's very interesting that it came as part of the federal health accord, when the ministers of health went last fall to the federal government to say they needed more help in terms of supporting the health care system. The federal government said, "We believe it's very important to effectively address health care needs in our community to begin assisting the youngest and families, to be proactive." So it was sort of out of those kinds of discussions that the federal government, as part of the health accord, dedicated a significant amount of money to support families and children across Canada.

They dedicated \$2.1 billion, and over the next five years Ontario will receive \$855 million. On April 1, Ontario received \$144 million, and it is out of that federal money that we have the challenge fund here in Ontario; it is being supported with those dollars. So certainly I

believe that any money we spend on children is money very well invested, and I'm delighted that the federal accord has made that possible.

I'm particularly interested in a number of family needs within communities. Are you familiar with the child care needs within your community? Are there waiting lists? How are child care programs administered? Is it centre-based? Is it home-based? Is it regulated?

Mrs Shimmin: I believe there are all three kinds. I am not sure of the number of spaces that are being allocated or waited for.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Do you have a preference or do you have an opinion about regulated child care as opposed to unregulated? Do you think one might be better?

Mrs Shimmin: I believe parents should have a choice, but I also believe that people who need daycare and don't have it should have the opportunity to have a daycare space.

Mrs Dombrowsky: It can be that regulated care is more expensive. So you can appreciate that unless you're able to access a subsidized space, you may not have a choice.

Mrs Shimmin: I realize that.

Mrs Dombrowsky: You appreciate that regulated space, though, provides some security and some guarantee for families in terms of the quality of care of their children. Would you, in your role, be an advocate for a particular delivery model?

Mrs Shimmin: Well, I would first like to find out the statistics in Northumberland, and eventually, yes, there should be daycare available for those who need and want it.

Mrs Dombrowsky: We've talked about the money from the federal government. The province has put in place a plan in terms of its expenditure in a variety of programs. Not a penny of it was directed toward daycare.

Mrs Shimmin: Aren't there many other programs that need it probably just as much?

Mrs Dombrowsky: That's interesting that you would bring that forward, because when the federal government provided the money, there were four areas that were designated that would be legitimate areas for expenditure. Of the four areas, daycare or child care was one of them, although unfortunately that has not been the plan of this government.

I just wondered if, as a member of the steering committee, you might be inclined to press for—

Mrs Shimmin: I have no idea at the moment what I would press for. I really would first have to confer with the committee, add my opinion, research the statistics and learn about what is needed and what isn't.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Northumberland county covers some geography. Would it be your expectation that with the establishment of the family parenting centres they would be located throughout the jurisdiction or would there be—what's the main community in Northumberland?

Mrs Shimmin: They would have to be scattered throughout. There are many people without even transportation to go any of these long distances who might need them.

Mrs Dombrowsky: You would say they have to be?

Mrs Shimmin: I think so.

Mrs Dombrowsky: I'm a rural representative too. I think it's very important that some of the rural communities would have access, but that is an issue, transportation, in many parts of the province.

Mrs Shimmin: Certainly it is.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Are you familiar with the Early Years Study that was commissioned by the government?

Mrs Shimmin: No, I'm not familiar with it. I certainly have heard of it, but I know very little about it at the moment.

Mrs Dombrowsky: That was the document that was written by Dr Fraser Mustard and the Honourable Margaret McCain.

Mrs Shimmin: Oh, and Margaret McCain?

Mrs Dombrowsky: Yes. The Early Years Study: Reversing the Real Brain Drain is the title of the document. Really, it has been recognized internationally as a significant piece of work in recognizing the importance of supporting families and children at their earliest stages. Are you familiar with the Campaign 2000 document?

Mrs Shimmin: No. Campaign 2000?

Mrs Dombrowsky: Campaign 2000.

Mrs Shimmin: They're not a government body? They're a special interest group, aren't they?

Mrs Dombrowsky: They're a group of people who are interested in the poor and the fact that we continue to have child poverty particularly. They have a report that clearly indicates there are many families that continue to be at risk; in fact, there are more families that continue to be at risk. We know children especially do not perform well when they are from an environment that is poor, where they don't have enough food or they may not have a home in which to live. Do you have any sense in your community and in Northumberland county if that is an issue? Is homelessness an issue? Is child poverty an issue?

Mrs Shimmin: I don't know about homelessness in Northumberland, but child poverty has been with us forever.

Mrs Dombrowsky: It's worse now.

Mrs Shimmin: Yes, it probably is. It's an issue in a young child's life as to why they don't learn or prosper in school, in that arena. But there are lots of other issues too. It has to be dealt with but in context with everything else.

Mrs Dombrowsky: I thank you very much for your time today.

The Chair: The time for the official opposition is unfortunately concluded, and we now must go to the third party. Mr Martin.

Mr Martin: Thank you for coming this morning and for volunteering after many years of hard work on behalf of the province and the government.

The establishment of this framework across the province to deal with early childhood issues is an issue that I think is very important and key. I'm concerned. It has tremendous potential, but it may not achieve that potential if it doesn't have the strength of character to deal with some of the issues that I feel—and others may not, but certainly for me it's a priority—are key or central or fundamental to anything we will do in the area of early childhood development, which is dealing with the issue of poverty and children, because in a most direct way any child coming to school hungry or not having a proper home that's safe and warm will be behind the eight ball before they even start. If you put a significant number of children from that kind of background into a school, it also draws from the ability of that school to actually reach its potential as well.

The issue of child poverty was referenced earlier. Campaign 2000, yes, they're a special interest group. They're especially interested in the issue of poverty. They were formed after the federal Legislature in 1989 passed the unanimous resolution that they would do away with child poverty by the year 2000. But the statistics they've put out say that where we had one in 10 in 1989, we now have one in five. How important will that be for you in the work you will do on this committee?

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Mrs Shimmin: On child poverty?

Mr Martin: Yes.

Mrs Shimmin: It will be very important, just as important really as all the other issues that come up. A child can't learn if they're hungry, if they don't have an adequate home, but by the same reason, a child can't learn if they've been totally ignored by their parents, both of them working all day and then going out every night. That's no basis for a child to learn either.

Mr Martin: Yes.

Mrs Shimmin: There are a lot of issues. Certainly child poverty will be one of the highest. That's all I can say.

Mr Martin: If you discovered in your analysis and work and study, which I'm sure you will do as you come to the table in this capacity, as the folks who put the Early Years Study together discovered, that in fact poverty was a huge issue and that, as it says here, there were member agencies who spoke to the Early Years Study as it travelled the province who said they're seeing more children who are going hungry and children who have been taken into the care of children's aid societies because the family is homeless, and the list goes on, and you discover that one of the reasons for that is that the decision the provincial government made in June 1995 to reduce the income of people on assistance by 21.6% is contributing directly to that, would you be willing to support a recommendation from your group to the government to maybe take a look at that again?

Mrs Shimmin: I really can't answer that. I do know that when the government reduced the amount of welfare it gave to families, it reduced it only to the level the rest of Canadians were getting. I'm not in a position to give direction to the government. I don't understand all their policies. Some I like; some I don't like. It might be an issue with the committee. I'm really not sure.

Mr Martin: Let me share another reality that's confronting a lot of families out there that I speak to on a regular basis now. I've taken on a bit of a project to try to understand the nature and the causes of, and perhaps take a look at what we might do together to relieve, some of the poverty that's out there. But there was a program put in place by the federal government a couple of years ago in response to that resolution of 1989 that added to the child tax benefit that we all get if we have children. I have four children at home, but my income is such that I don't qualify for the supplement they introduced that would go to low-income families. The provincial government—and this provincial government isn't alone. There are governments across this country, including some NDP governments, who have in their wisdom decided that they would claw back the supplement which is going to low-income families. It averages out to about \$80 per child per month. It's significant to a family on assistance. If you had two or three kids, you're talking \$150 to \$250 a month. That buys a lot of milk and all that. This government and others have decided to claw back that money, dollar for dollar, from families who are on assistance or who are on the Ontario disability support program. Do you think that's right?

Mrs Shimmin: What do they do with the money? They can't just fix the roads with it. They must use it in children's programs.

Mr Martin: They are: 20% of it stays in the municipality and 80% of it goes back to the province. We're told—and I have no argument with this—that the money is being used to provide some very valuable programs in communities, some of it going to daycare, some of it going to Healthy Babies, Healthy Children, this kind of thing, which are good programs. Maybe my thinking is wrong, but it seems to me that a government that has been promised and actually received a portion of some \$900 million for early childhood programming and has now, by way of their fiscal plan, generated some billion dollars in surplus and has announced in the budget of a week or two ago that another \$4.2 billion is going to be given back to corporations might be able to find that money someplace else other than taking it away from some of our more vulnerable and at-risk children re this supplement from the federal government.

Mrs Shimmin: I don't know what kind of programs they are funding with this money. Obviously, they're designed for children and surely they do children and families. Perhaps they enhance parenting skills in some of the more poverty-stricken families who might not be too interested in parenting because they have other problems. That, too, I would have to investigate and find

out exactly what they were doing with it before I had an opinion on it.

Mr Martin: The issue for me is, again, to go back to it—and you're right. Some of the money is being used to provide some really valuable and important programs, but that should be funded, in my view, from another source rather than taking it out of the pockets of families trying to put food on the table for hungry children.

Mrs Shimmin: I've never worked in finance so I'm really not sure where the money goes or how much goes. Perhaps you're right.

The Chair: Thank you very much. That concludes the questioning. Thank you for appearing before the committee.

PATRICIA McCARTHY

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Patricia McCarthy, intended appointee as member, Early Years Steering Committee of the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit.

The Chair: The next individual is an intended appointee as member, the Early Years Steering Committee of the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit, Patricia McCarthy. Welcome to the committee. You have an opportunity, should you see fit, to make an initial statement or not, whatever you choose.

Ms Patricia McCarthy: Good morning, Mr Chairman and members of the committee. Thank you for inviting me to meet with you today. My name is Patricia McCarthy. I am a retired teacher-librarian now living in Brighton, Ontario. My teaching career began in Welland, in the Niagara area, in 1958 at the elementary school level. I later moved into teaching high school in London, Ontario, and moved to Toronto in 1963, where I taught high school until 1968, when I resigned my teaching duties to become a full-time mother of a son and daughter for the next seven years.

In 1975 I returned to the elementary school system in Markham as a teacher-librarian, working with students from JK to grade 8, until my retirement in 1996. As a teacher-librarian, my focus was literacy: reading, writing and research skills.

I worked closely with the primary division teachers on developing a parents' reading program with their children, supported the reading recovery program in grade 1, which identified children with early reading difficulties, and worked on a one-to-one basis with students from grades 2 and 3 who were experiencing reading difficulties. I initiated and ran a reading circle program for students from grades 2 to 6 one night a week after school for an hour, for three years. This program was very successful as it required parents' permission and cooperation.

I was a resident of North York from 1963 to 1996. From 1994 to 1996, I became involved as a volunteer with Fairview library's after-school program to help students experiencing reading difficulties, in which I worked with a student on a one-to-one basis. I also

worked as a volunteer for one year in an evening program run through Fairview library with adult immigrants wishing to improve their literacy skills in the areas of reading and writing.

I moved to Brighton in July 1999. In January 2000 I volunteered one morning a week at the Brighton public school in the library, helping a grade 1 student who was experiencing reading difficulties. Currently I am volunteering one morning a week at the Brighton Public Library helping to bar-code their collection for automated circulation. I've been appointed to the corporation of Brighton's library board for a three-year term and serve on the public relations and fundraising committee on that board.

I am honoured to be considered for a position on the steering committee for the Early Years initiative. Children have been my lifelong interest, particularly young children. I am a grandmother of a 2½-year-old granddaughter and 9-month-old grandson. Children continue to teach and delight me. Investing in our children is the best investment we can make for our future.

Members of the committee, I would be pleased to answer, to the best of my ability, any questions you may pose.

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The Chair: Thank you very much. We begin the questioning with the official opposition.

Mrs Dombrowsky: You've indicated in the material you sent to us that you are familiar with the Early Years Study and the recommendations of the Fraser Mustard report. Certainly some of the comments you've made so far I think indicate that much of your own life experience is consistent with what would be recommended there within that document. Mustard talks about community hubs and the importance of the school within many communities, or that a natural hub within many and most communities would be the school. Do you have any ideas on how the school might better be a community hub than might be the case right now?

Ms McCarthy: It's interesting that you raise that question because I was just thinking the other evening that our schools are really underused in many ways. Certainly it could be used as a hub for projects.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Do you have any specific ideas on how they might be better used?

Ms McCarthy: It would depend again on the area, on the accessibility. We hear so much about schools that have declining enrolment, so obviously there are empty spaces. Also, once school is finished, what use is the school being put to? Sometimes there are community colleges that have courses. But I'm sure there are times when the buildings could be used.

Again, if we are talking about parents and working parents, evening would be an ideal time to use these buildings that are already there and with which the community is familiar. And it would save the expenditure of any further infrastructure. I think it is excellent.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Does it make sense to incorporate child care centres into schools?

Ms McCarthy: Oh, definitely.

Mrs Dombrowsky: There were governments that thought that was important, but there are challenges now. The funding formula actually penalized boards if they did not allocate space within their building as instructional space. Do you think the provision of child care is child instruction?

Ms McCarthy: I'm not familiar with the child care programs but I'm sure there is an element of instruction. It seems to me, just going back to the board that I was employed with, that any of the new schools that were put up in the last, say from 1990 on, yes, there seemed to be a section of that for child care.

Mrs Dombrowsky: As a matter of fact, there was at one time a requirement that any new schools must include child care space. That no longer is the case. In fact, schools would be penalized if the space is not used strictly for instructional purposes.

It strikes me as strange that in many communities in Ontario community schools are closing because not every square inch of the school is a classroom space, yet we have in these same communities literally thousands of families looking for child care spaces and they are not to be had. In many cases, it is because they don't have an ideal location in which to locate these centres. It is an observation that is being more regularly made now, at the present time.

Are you familiar with the federal child development core dollars? Are you familiar with that initiative that the federal government embarked upon with the provinces in the fall of last year?

Ms McCarthy: Yes.

Mrs Dombrowsky: So you know that Ontario is especially blessed to receive a significant amount of that money. When I say especially blessed, of course, the allocation is on a population basis. That is why Ontario received a significant amount of money that was allocated to provinces specifically for meeting the needs of families and children. Are you aware that with money that has come to Ontario not one cent has been designated for the support of child care?

Ms McCarthy: I was made aware of that when you were discussing this issue with the lady who went before me.

Mrs Dombrowsky: I'm sure that with the role you will assume, that is going to be an issue you will face in terms of how you might assist families within communities to access affordable child care. You are familiar with the fact that there are regulated child care services within communities and unregulated services. Do you have a particular position on whether all families should have the opportunity to access regulated spaces?

Ms McCarthy: I would like to take the privilege of withholding any remark with respect to daycare—

Mrs Dombrowsky: OK.

Ms McCarthy: —except to say that—

Mrs Dombrowsky: I was saying "child care," and you say "daycare."

Ms McCarthy: There was one thing that I would be most curious, from some research information that I did,

to look at. That would be the Quebec situation in which they have found allotments, I believe it is, for the Quebec approach to child care in which they have regulated spaces—I'm very curious about that—for four-year-olds in either centre-based programs or family child care homes. I understand that this program has been accepted by the report that was made and by a number of other groups that are concerned about children's welfare.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Certainly, what is most attractive about the Quebec model is that it is a plan of regulated service, but it is a plan that is universally accessible for \$5 a day. So it's not a means-tested plan; wherever you live in Quebec and whatever your income would be, you would be able to access regulated spaces at \$5 a day. As you can imagine, in Ontario, where even access to regulated space can be a challenge and in many communities they are several thousands of spaces short, that is a most appealing scenario.

How is it that you have come to be an appointee to this committee? Did you see an ad in the paper? Did someone invite you to submit an application?

Ms McCarthy: My next-door neighbour, whom you just interviewed prior to myself, knew that I was interested in volunteering and working with children because of my past experience in teaching and that I had worked as a volunteer last year in Brighton public school. So she gave me the information to read and I thought, "Oh, great, literacy," because that is a strong point with me. So I thought, "Fine, I'll just send in an application and see what happens."

Mrs Dombrowsky: Do you have any political affiliation?

Ms McCarthy: Absolutely not, and I might say I do feel that all political parties should make children's issues a top priority in their programs.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Very good. That would conclude my questions.

The Chair: We now move to the third party. Mr Martin.

Mr Martin: Thanks for coming this morning. My concern, as I expressed to the woman who came before you, is that the government is moving to sort of entrench an attitude where early childhood education and families are concerned. It is starting to produce a result that should be disconcerting to a lot of people, and that's in the area of child poverty and families struggling to meet the basic needs, and also where education is concerned.

I was interested in your background in education and your obvious skills and appreciation of the very important work that goes on there. Just to share with you and get some response, because it reflects my concern very clearly, recently Dr Mustard, who is one of the authors of the Early Years Study that was referenced earlier, gave a speech to the Probus Club in Brantford in which he criticized the Minister of Education for suggesting that students' poor scores on the province-wide tests administered by the Education Quality and Accountability Office were the responsibility of teachers and the school system. Dr Mustard argued that the Early

Years Study research demonstrated that students' test results reflect a host of factors, including parenting. He said society cannot expect the school system to fix all of its ails. What would your perspective on that be?

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Ms McCarthy: I would agree with him 100%. If people are going to have children—you know, it's really interesting when you look at what we need licences for. We need a licence to drive a car, to drive a plane, to start a business, but nobody needs a licence to be a parent. There are many people who would love to be good parents, but they just don't have the skills. They don't know how to do this. But basically, parents are responsible for their children. I think this is why some of our school systems today are overloaded with burdens that shouldn't have been put on them in the first place.

Mr Martin: Just let me share another scenario with you that I've been struggling with, and it's the attitude of the government, on one side, that as taxpayers we should have more control over the money we make and more decision-making power over where we spend it. Yet, when it comes to poor families by way of some of the initiatives they've put forward, they tend to believe that when families are poor, they aren't going to be as responsible in terms of how they spend their money and so they're taking it away from them and then deciding, as government, how they will spend it on their behalf with the view that this will somehow improve the circumstance or the situation for families.

What we're hearing from Campaign 2000, which we referenced earlier, and from a piece out of the Early Years Study, indicates that agencies are seeing more children who are going hungry, children who have been taken into care of children's aid because the family is homeless, more family stress and more mothers with children in shelters for the victims of family violence.

This government took 21.6% out of the income of our most vulnerable and at-risk families and just recently decided to claw back on average \$80 to \$100 a month per child from families getting money from the federal government through the national tax benefit supplement and introducing their own programs, which I think are actually very good programs, but paying for them with the money they're taking away from some of these families who need it to provide basic food and shelter for themselves and their children. What would be your view on that?

Ms McCarthy: If I understand you correctly, Mr Martin, you're saying a certain amount is being clawed back from individual families and that money then is being turned over to regions and spent, I guess, on a needs-assessment basis on programs that the children in those areas need.

I would have to say that if we look at it in another way, when you have a large pool of money, it frees you up to provide a lot more than just one single—for example, if I had \$100 each month and was trying to accomplish a certain number of things, I would be a bit hamstrung, as opposed to being in a community where

there were, say, 20 people and we pooled the \$100 each. I think we would be able to experience a wider variety of activities, programs, whatever, than just being left up to the individual trying to perhaps come up with similar resources.

Mr Martin: That would be OK in my mind too if I didn't, though, on the other hand, understand that the government now has \$1 billion in surplus—that was last year's budget—has announced this year that they're going to give \$4.2 billion back to corporations by way of reduction—

Ms McCarthy: Are we talking about the provincial government or the federal?

Mr Martin: Yes, the provincial government. At the same time, as in this instance, to provide these very valuable services, they've decided that the money they're going to use for that they're going to take away from some of our most vulnerable and at-risk families who would have used that money. There's no doubt in my mind that if you're making \$13,000 a year and you're getting \$100 or \$200 a month from the federal government targeted to providing you with a little bit more to feed your family so that when they go to school they're not coming in hungry and presenting to teachers the challenge that we spoke of a few minutes ago, certainly it doesn't sound fair.

I think it's great that we provide those programs and that we pool money—that's what we do when we pay taxes—to provide those kinds of programs, but to be taking money directly away from poor families to pay for those programs when we have \$1 billion in surplus and we're talking about more tax reductions for those who really don't need it—I say this, those who really don't need it, because to convince anybody that they don't need a tax cut is difficult these days—doesn't that sound a bit unfair?

Ms McCarthy: Yes, it does.

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): That's only half the story.

Mr Martin: No, it's actually the whole story. What you present is half the story and what I'm trying to take a look at here is in fact the whole story.

I guess when you get a chance, which you will, because there's no doubt in my mind that your appointment will be approved here this morning, I think you'll be a good appointment.

Ms McCarthy: Thank you.

Mr Martin: But when you get the whole story and you begin to see the things that I've been looking at for the last number of months particularly, but over a long period of time generally, and you discover that there is some unfairness where this kind of thing is concerned, would you be willing perhaps to encourage your board, to begin to send messages that would be supportive of more fairness, as opposed to less?

Ms McCarthy: I can certainly assure you that in looking at the needs assessments for the Haliburton-Kawartha-Pine Ridge area, and of course at this moment I do not know what those needs are, if this becomes an

issue and a need for that area, certainly I think that is part of our mandate, to put forward the suggestions we find that are necessary for that area and for our children to arrive at this level that the study is asking.

Can I ask a question?

Mr Martin: Sure.

Ms McCarthy: There have been a number of statements made with regard to reports and something 2000 and this report and that. As an ordinary, average citizen paying taxes etc, how does one become aware, number one, that these wonderful studies have been done, and secondly, if one wanted to read a copy of them for their own information and enlightenment, where would you find them?

Mr Johnson: The NDP caucus.

Mr Martin: Yes, we have them, but I think even more appropriately—

The Chair: Mr Pond could help us out with this.

Mr David Pond: Depending on which ones you're interested in, some of them are available off of the government of Ontario's Web site, if you follow all the links. Other ones are available through the Ontario government's bookstore, and bookstores. I'd hazard a guess that if you wrote your local member, both provincially and federally, he or she might be able to supply any titles that you can list for them.

Ms McCarthy: All right. Now you've given me a source, once we know these documents are there—

Mr Pond: I might add, I suspect that when you are appointed to this committee there will be resource people attached to it who will probably be bringing you and your colleagues up to date on the state of the art in this area. Judging from the job description for the community coordinators who will be appointed to assist the Early Years Steering Committees around the province, I suspect that will be the case.

The Chair: I'll now go to the government members.

Mr Wood: We will waive our time.

The Chair: The government members will waive their time.

Thank you very much for being with us today and we appreciate your appearance. It's one of the few times I've seen the nominee ask the questions, so it's rather nice to see that.

We will now proceed with the concurrences that are normally motions forthcoming after these. I take it we haven't done any yet.

The first is the intended appointee as member, Council of the College of Midwives of Ontario: Pawanjit Gosal.

Mr Wood: I move concurrence.

The Chair: Concurrence is moved by Mr Wood. Any comment or discussion? If not, I'll call the vote. All in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

The next is Mr Ian Turnbull, intended appointee as chair, the Early Years Steering Committee of the Muskoka-Parry Sound Health Unit.

Mr Wood: I move concurrence.

The Chair: Mr Wood has moved concurrence. Comment?

Mr Martin: I believe Mr Turnbull will have a very definite conflict of interest in this appointment, being the commissioner of social services and also acting as chair of this body. I think it would be more helpful to the nature of the work that this group is being asked to do to have those two positions be separate individuals without the obvious connections. There's just a ton of work to be done in this area out there. To have anybody, particularly the chair, even on an infrequent basis, have to declare a conflict of interest takes away from the possibility that's there. I will not be supporting this appointment.

The Chair: Thank you for your comments. Any other comments of any member of the committee? If not, I will call the vote. All in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

The next is Lesley Shimmin, intended appointee as member, the Early Years Steering Committee of the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit.

Mr Wood: I move concurrence.

The Chair: Mr Wood has moved concurrence. Comment or discussion?

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): I missed the opportunity to ask a question so I just want to make a comment. I was listening in a positive way to this nominee until the question was asked about Campaign 2000, and then there was a very quick answer, "Isn't that an interest group?" The question I would have asked—and I could have assumed what the answers were—was, last night, for example, there was a reception downstairs by the Canadian Bar Association. I wonder what they are. Developers come to Queen's Park. I wonder what they are. Road builders come to Queen's Park. Would they be a special interest group? Probably. Then, my question would be,

what are children in poverty? Who advocates for them? It was just the fact that the Campaign 2000 report was being brushed off as just another interest group. We deal with interest groups every day. That just gives me a little concern about this appointment.

The Chair: Any other comments?

Mr Morley Kells (Etobicoke-Lakeshore): You should have mentioned the teachers' union, the federation of labour and other interest groups.

Mr Crozier: Sure. I had insurance brokers down here, I had teachers. Yes, all of them.

The Chair: Mr Kells?

Mr Kells: No.

Mr Crozier: Municipal politicians.

Mr Kells: It is an honourable living representing an interest group, I assure you.

Mr Crozier: Everybody's an interest group.

The Chair: Any other comment or discussion? If not, I'll call the vote. All in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

The next is Patricia McCarthy, intended appointee as member, the Early Years Steering Committee of the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit.

Mr Wood: I move concurrence.

The Chair: Concurrence is moved by Mr Wood. Any discussion? If not, I'll call the vote. All in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

I don't think there's any other business before the committee.

Mr Wood: I move adjournment.

The Chair: Adjournment is moved by Mr Wood. All in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

The committee adjourned at 1145.

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