



ISSN 1181-6465

Legislative Assembly
of Ontario
Second Session, 37th Parliament

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

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 20 June 2001

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Mercredi 20 juin 2001

**Standing committee on
estimates**

Ministry of Education

**Comité permanent des
budgets des dépenses**

Ministère de l'Éducation

Chair: Gerard Kennedy
Clerk: Susan Sourial

Président : Gerard Kennedy
Greffière : Susan Sourial

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Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



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3330 Édifice Whitney ; 99, rue Wellesley ouest
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400 ; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
ESTIMATESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES
BUDGETS DES DÉPENSES

Wednesday 20 June 2001

Mercredi 20 juin 2001

The committee met at 1552 in room 228.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

The Vice-Chair (Mr Alvin Curling): Could we resume the estimates for the Ministry of Education? Today we start with the New Democratic Party, 20 minutes.

M. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-Baie James) : Monsieur le Président, j'ai un petit problème. J'ai des questions que je veux demander en français faisant affaire avec une école à Hearst, mais il n'y a pas de traduction ici présentement.

The Vice-Chair: I may say that we don't have any—

Mr Bisson: Just in English, so you understood what I said, I have some questions that are pertaining to a school in Hearst. I'd like to ask them in French, and unfortunately the minister does not have translation equipment.

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre): None of us does.

The Vice-Chair: That's the point I was going to make too. I understand your drift.

Mr Bisson: Is the Amethyst Room open?

Clerk Pro Tem (Ms Tonia Grannum): No. Finance committee is in the Amethyst Room. We could try—

Ms Sue Herbert: Mr Chair, if I may, my ADM for francophone services is here beside me. If the committee were willing and if, Monsieur Bisson, that was acceptable—

The Vice-Chair: I would have difficulty with that. Here are the alternatives we have. We can recess until they set up the process for translation in here; it may take a couple of minutes. I would say that should not be taken away from the estimates time whatsoever, because he should have those facilities.

Mr Bisson: That would be acceptable.

The Vice-Chair: The problem we may have here, though, is that it will take about half an hour to an hour to set up. That's the situation. I don't know if they have the room in here so that they could set up the translation process. So it would be the wish of the committee, then, to recess for half an hour to an hour to accommodate setting up those facilities?

Mr Bisson: OK. That's acceptable.

The Vice-Chair: You'd like that recess to happen in order to set it up?

Mr Bisson: Yes. The problem is that I just spoke to the school that was here a little while ago and I do want to do this in French, as is my right. So I'd ask for the recess until we set up.

The Vice-Chair: Is that agreeable with the committee? I would say that from what I heard from the clerk, it may take a minimum of half an hour to an hour. Let's say we recess for 45 minutes.

Mr Bisson: Then we come back at what time?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader): Chair, a suggestion?

The Vice-Chair: Sure.

Hon Mrs Ecker: I don't know logistically if it's possible, but is it possible to go on with other times until they get that set up? Then, if Mr Bisson has time—

The Vice-Chair: I would then have to ask Mr Bisson, because it is his time. We would have to leave the rotation and skip—

Mr Bisson: I don't want to skip a rotation.

Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park): We'd come back to him.

The Vice-Chair: But I would have to respect his time on this. If he chooses that way—

Hon Mrs Ecker: We don't deny him the time.

The Vice-Chair: —I can accommodate that. If not, we take a recess.

Mr Bisson: The first question is, can it be done, set up at the same time? I don't know.

The Vice-Chair: It's my understanding it can be set up in about half an hour to an hour.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): Can the hearings go on at the same time?

The Vice-Chair: The hearings could not go on, because Mr Bisson wants to do it in French.

Mr Gerretsen: But can you set up the translation and at the same time have the hearings go on to other matters?

The Vice-Chair: No, I don't see that it's practical. The fact is that he's going to proceed—and it's his 20 minutes—in French and I would not be able to facilitate as the Chair for that time.

Mr Gerretsen: I totally adhere to your ruling, Mr Chair.

The Vice-Chair: It seems to me we will have to take a recess until a quarter to 5, when we are back here.

The committee recessed from 1556 to 1648.

The Vice-Chair: May we commence the estimates. Thanks for your co-operation. For the translation, English is on channel 1 and French is on channel 2. We will now commence, Mr Bisson.

M. Bisson : Premièrement j'aimerais remarquer, monsieur le Président, et madame la greffière aussi et le groupe technique—pour s'organiser pour avoir les traducteurs. C'est très apprécié pour moi comme député qui représente un comté où la majorité est francophone. C'est important d'être capable de faire notre devoir en français ici.

Deuxièmement, j'aimerais faire une motion pour ne pas répéter ce qui est arrivé aujourd'hui. On a perdu bien proche de 45 minutes. Si on pourrait avoir les comités des estimés se rencontrer dans l'Amethyst Room, où on a déjà la traduction simultanée, la semaine prochaine.

Est-ce que je peux avoir quelqu'un pour seconder la motion ?

The Vice-Chair: We'll second the motion for—but let me just deal with the first part of it. We have not lost any time.

Mr Bisson: No, no. I realize that.

The Vice-Chair: Therefore, the time for that 45-minute set-up will be extended. If I understand you correctly, you would like this to be moved to room 151 on Tuesday.

M. Bisson : C'est ça.

The Vice-Chair: And there's a seconder?

M. Kennedy: Oui.

The Vice-Chair: So we have Mr Kennedy seconding that. I presume you're all in favour of that.

Interjections: No.

Mr Frank Mazzilli (London-Fanshawe): No. I call for a recorded vote, Mr Chair.

M. Bisson: Une discussion, M. le Président, s'il vous plaît.

The Vice-Chair: Go ahead.

M. Bisson : Vous allez voir, les députés, membres du gouvernement, que les pauvres traducteurs ont besoin de traduire en arrière dans votre oreille. Cette salle n'est pas vraiment convenable pour la traduction, comme on voit. Moi, je parle et je peux entendre le traducteur qui parle derrière moi ; ce n'est pas bon pour vous autres et ce n'est pas bon pour moi. Justement, regardez, vous êtes en train de jouer avec vos appareils. Ce n'est pas pour vous donner des problèmes. C'est que la salle 151 a toutes les facilités nécessaires pour faire la traduction simultanée d'une manière adéquate. C'est pour cette raison que je demande ça.

The Vice-Chair: Mr Kennedy.

M. Kennedy : Je suis d'accord avec le député. C'est le droit de ce député et de tous les députés ensemble, de tous les membres du gouvernement, d'avoir les services en français et d'une manière qui est professionnelle. Il me semble qu'il est nécessaire d'avoir la seule salle qui est appropriée pour cela. Je suis d'accord et j'espère que le gouvernement reconnaît que c'est le droit des membres dans cette chambre. Je ne sais pas où est le problème avec la requête de ce membre-ci.

The Vice-Chair: Mr Wettlaufer.

Mr Wettlaufer: I'm a primarily English-speaking individual, and I have to say I have no trouble understanding the translators. This translation equipment works very fine, and I am quite satisfied to stay right here in this room.

The Vice-Chair: Let me just say this. I've been pretty generous in allowing all this discussion to happen. I understand that the Chair has the right to just say that this can be moved to 151, and I think Mr Bisson's request to have it in 151 would facilitate us much easier than this sort of set-up. I don't know if I should say that the motion was not in order in that respect. But then, just to rule, if it's available, we'll move to 151 on Tuesday.

M. Bisson : Si j'ai bien compris, la semaine prochaine on va être dans la salle 151. Mardi, oui ?

The Vice-Chair: Yes, if it's available, of course we will be.

M. Bisson : Merci.

Madame la ministre, premièrement, bienvenue encore une autre fois. On s'est trouvé l'année passée devant ces estimés. C'est notre troisième année ensemble. Ça commence d'être une habitude.

Le printemps donne, comme vous savez bien, la chance aux étudiants à travers la province de venir à Queen's Park à travers le programme jeunes voyageurs. Justement aujourd'hui ça donne qu'on a eu des écoles des communautés de Hearst, de Kap et de Timmins qui ont été ici. Moi, sachant que je serais ici aujourd'hui, j'ai demandé aux élèves, « Avez-vous des questions que vous voulez demander à la ministre de l'Éducation ? » et les questions que j'aimerais vous poser à ce point-ci sont les questions qui ont été complètement pensées par eux. J'aimerais que vous soyez capable de répondre. On va prendre l'information et on va l'envoyer aux écoles après.

La première question : une des préoccupations des jeunes est toute la discussion qui se passe avec la question des uniformes. Comme vous savez, je pense que c'était l'été passé, il y a eu certaines discussions pour avoir des uniformes mandatées dans les écoles à travers la province. Les élèves ne sont pas en faveur de ça et ils m'ont demandé de vous demander où vous en êtes rendus comme ministre et comme gouvernement avec cette question, et avez-vous l'intention d'obliger les écoles primaires ou secondaires, ou les deux, à adopter une uniforme d'école ?

Hon Mrs Ecker: Thank you very much, Mr Bisson. My apologies for not being able to answer your students in their language.

First of all, vis-à-vis school uniforms, our policy is that the decision about whether or not a school would have a uniform policy is a decision that parents make. The school council regulation that comes into effect this fall clearly lays out that authority, if you will, and school boards are responsible for setting processes in place so that parents would make the decision. Again, how the decision is made varies from school to school and board to board, but we felt the best way to resolve the

sometimes disagreement that can exist was to let parents themselves make the decision.

M. Bisson : Si on comprend bien le processus, pour que les élèves comprennent, c'est le conseil des parents de l'école qui fait la décision et le conseil scolaire doit accepter cette décision ?

Hon Mrs Ecker: No, it's up to the parents to make that decision.

M. Bisson : Sur le conseil des écoles ?

Hon Mrs Ecker: The school board sets the policy about how the decision is made, but the authority for the decision is the parents.

M. Bisson : Au conseil d'école.

Hon Mrs Ecker: Of the school.

M. Bisson : The school council, le conseil des écoles.

Hon Mrs Ecker: There is a process, and actually, if you would like, Mr Bisson, do you want to walk through the process for the school uniforms?

M. Bisson : Si vous êtes capable d'expliquer aux élèves, parce que c'est une préoccupation qu'ils ont, puis je veux faire sûr que nous, on comprend bien pour les élèves. C'est que le conseil scolaire adopte la politique, et c'est le conseil des écoles des parents qui fait la décision, et si eux autres disent, "Oui," ils sont forcés de porter une uniforme.

M. Maurice Proulx : D'accord. Monsieur le Président, Maurice Proulx. Je suis ministre adjoint, éducation langue française et educational operations.

Vous avez raison, monsieur Bisson. C'est bel et bien le conseil d'école, qui est formé à majorité de parents, qui prend la décision. Le conseil scolaire établit les politiques pour le fonctionnement de cette prise de décision, mais la prise de décision comme telle est faite par le conseil d'école qui, lui, est composé à majorité de parents.

M. Bisson : Ça veut dire que c'est très possible, une fois que la décision sera faite, à l'école Saint-Louis à Hearst ou dans l'école Jacques Cartier à Kap, que les jeunes seront forcés de porter une uniforme.

M. Proulx : Ce serait une décision qui est prise par les parents. Vous avez raison.

M. Bisson : Madame la ministre, moi, je n'ai jamais été d'accord avec la question des uniformes, justement quand j'étais au secondaire à l'école secondaire Thériault. C'était notre école qui a milité pour se débarrasser des uniformes. J'étais un de ces militants, et on a eu le succès d'arrêter la politique des uniformes. Je me trouve asteur, dans ma carrière de politicien, encore dans la même bataille que j'ai eue quand j'avais 14 ou 15 ans.

Je vous demande, vous personnellement : êtes-vous en faveur des uniformes ? C'est une des questions qu'ils veulent savoir. Moi, je ne le suis pas.

Hon Mrs Ecker: I think the question, quite frankly, is not whether you or I support or are in favour; it's what the parents think is appropriate for their children.

What I have heard from students is that there's no question that students who do not yet have or are not in a school that has a uniform policy—one of the things I have found is that they do tend to usually be very uneasy

or not like it or express concerns about it. Where I've talked to students in schools where they didn't have one and now have one, the students have said to me that they like it better with a dress code, because it's a dress code or a school uniform.

The reason they used for why it was better—there were a couple of things. One is the security, because everyone knows who's part of the school community. Because of the dress, they can recognize people, students, or strangers who shouldn't be in the school. So in some schools the number of incidents they had with students who came on to the school property to do things they shouldn't be doing dropped, they told me, practically overnight when they brought in the school uniform policy, because all of a sudden they were strangers and people knew who they were. So there's a security issue that students talk about, that it makes them feel more secure.

M. Bisson : Madame la ministre, ce n'est pas la question que je vous ai demandée. Moi, ce que demande, c'est ce que les étudiants m'ont demandé. J'ai expliqué la politique, tel que vous l'avez expliquée tout à l'heure, aux étudiants. Eux autres m'ont demandé, "Monsieur Bisson, comme notre député, êtes-vous en faveur, personnellement, oui ou non ?" J'ai dit non. Je demande à vous, parce qu'ils m'ont demandé de vous demander : personnellement, êtes-vous en faveur, oui ou non, des uniformes aux écoles ? Je comprends la politique. Je veux savoir, êtes-vous personnellement en faveur ? Moi, c'est non. Vous, c'est oui ou non ?

Hon Mrs Ecker: OK. I appreciate that, but I also thought it was important to get on the record that students who have gone through that change have reported very positive things about it, because the other important thing was that there are no longer the sorts of social cliques around who's got the neatest clothes, if you will, the coolest clothes or the most in-fashion clothes. So there were fewer "ins" and "outs," was the way that many students have expressed it.

I personally think a dress code or uniform policy is appropriate for a school. If I was a parent in a school, I would probably want to do that for my school. But I think that because of the differences of opinion, because of the differences in schools and school communities, it's not for me as minister to impose my view; it's for the parents to make that decision. Many of them actually, in the schools, do set up ways to consult with the students about it, which I think is a good way to do that.

1700

M. Bisson : Je comprends, et c'est apprécié que vous avez donné votre position personnelle. C'est ça que les élèves de l'école Saint-Louis ont demandé, et vous l'avez donnée.

Je sais qu'on pourrait avoir un gros débat. Il y a le débat de ceux qui sont en faveur—il y a certaines personnes qui veulent avoir, oui, une politique pour les uniformes—et il y a beaucoup de monde sur l'autre bord, tel que moi-même et comme les élèves, la majorité, qui ne sont pas en faveur.

On a fait un petit sondage avec les deux écoles aujourd'hui, parce que les deux ont demandé la même question, qui est intéressante, parce que ce sont des écoles séparées, pas de la même communauté, et la grosse majorité, 99 %, juste pour que vous le sachiez, n'étaient pas en faveur. C'est le message qu'ils voulaient que je vous amène.

L'autre question qu'ils demandent : il y avait encore, comme on dit en français, des cancans—en anglais on appelle ça des « rumours »—qu'il y avait une possibilité qu'on pourrait avoir un prolongement de l'année scolaire. On sait que l'été passé on en a parlé. Moi, je connais la réponse, mais j'aimerais que vous, comme ministre, seriez capable de répondre aux élèves d'école Saint-Louis. Est-ce que vous avez des plans, comme ministre de l'Éducation, ou est-ce que votre gouvernement a des plans pour allonger l'année scolaire pour les élèves à l'élémentaire ou secondaire ?

Hon Mrs Ecker: No, we don't. No.

M. Bisson : OK. Il n'y a pas de discussions dans cette direction ?

Hon Mrs Ecker: Not that I'm aware of. I think, monsieur Bisson, what we say to school boards is that there is a minimal amount of time that they have to have school. It's about 190 days of school they have to have. Whether a school wants to do it as year-round schooling or—I mean, some school boards have, because of the local culture, come back later in the fall. Some schools, as you know, break in the middle of the fall because of various things. So it's up to the school board to make that decision.

Where the rumour or the suggestion or concern may be coming from is, we do have the Task Force on Effective Schools, Dave Cooke and Ann Vanstone, who have been out consulting quite widely and will be making recommendations fairly shortly to the government on things they think would improve the effectiveness of schools. So I can only surmise that may be something that either people have recommended to them or that they themselves think they want to recommend to the government. But in the absence of that, I'm not aware of any other discussions—

M. Bisson : Mais vous, comme la ministre de l'Éducation, n'avez pas l'intention de prolonger l'année scolaire, personnellement ou comme gouvernement ?

Hon Mrs Ecker: If the task force makes that recommendation, I think the government should look at it. Obviously we've asked them to give us their advice, so if it is their advice that we should be looking at that, I think the government will look at it, but I don't know if that's indeed what they are going to say.

M. Bisson : OK, merci.

L'autre question que je veux demander fait affaire avec la 13^e année. Comme vous le savez, la décision était prise par votre gouvernement d'éliminer la 13^e année. Certaines personnes en sont en faveur ; je les comprends. Mais il y a aussi d'autres qui sont contre.

Une des questions que les écoles Saint-Louis et Jacques Cartier et même Frank P. Krznaric ont demandé

aujourd'hui et hier, c'est la question de la 13^e année. Ils savent que vous avez pris une décision d'éliminer la 13^e année. Ils comprennent que c'est une décision qui est faite et qui va être mise en place. Mais ils me demandent, premièrement, de vous demander de reconsidérer et de reprendre la 13^e année, parce que, comme élèves, ils pensent qu'ils en ont besoin pour se préparer à l'université. La deuxième question qu'ils me demandent : êtes-vous préparée à reconsidérer cette décision ?

Hon Mrs Ecker: I appreciate the concern of the students. We were the only jurisdiction in North America that was still at the 13 years. Every other jurisdiction had moved to 12 years, if you will. We were the only one that had 13. So when we had done our consultations, it seemed appropriate to go to 12 years, to completely overhaul the curriculum from kindergarten to grade 12. For those students who want to take an extra year, they can still do that. Even now with the grade 13 year, if you will, or OAC, as it's called, some students took their courses faster and some students took an extra year. So even though we're going to 12, as opposed to 13, they would still have the ability to take an extra year, if they wanted to do that.

M. Bisson : La dernière question que j'ai c'est la suivante : le système des semestres, comme vous le comprenez, dit que si les élèves ont un programme de gymnase, un programme athlétique dans leur premier semestre, pour l'année cela veut dire qu'ils ne vont avoir qu'un semestre avec le gymnase, soit le premier ou le deuxième. Les élèves sont très, très mécontents avec ce système et demandent, est-ce une possibilité où vous comme ministre êtes préparée à accepter l'idée que le programme de gymnase soit donné aux premier et deuxième semestres et non seulement un semestre par année ?

Hon Mrs Ecker: Which course was it? I'm sorry, I was paying attention to the monitor in the House there. It was phys ed?

M. Bisson : Phys ed. Nous autres, on dit qu'on va au gymnase. C'est le commentaire—

Hon Mrs Ecker: School boards can do that if they want. It would be up to a school board to make that decision to do that.

M. Bisson : C'est une question de financement, non ? Ce n'est pas une question de financement ?

Hon Mrs Ecker: I don't believe so. I'll just refer to my deputy here.

M. Proulx : Non, effectivement, la question de l'horaire, il y a des écoles qui fonctionnent encore avec un horaire à la ligne : les élèves prennent huit cours sur toute l'année, versus quatre cours et quatre cours.

M. Bisson : C'est ça.

M. Proulx : Puis pour certaines matières, il y a des conseils, puis plus particulièrement des écoles, qui vont céder certains cours qui vont être donnés sur toute l'année pour effectivement éliminer le problème que vous décrivez. Alors, ça, c'est une décision qui est prise sur le plan local.

M. Bisson : Dans un système où il y a deux semestres à l'école pour l'année, vous dites que le conseil scolaire pourrait décider en neuvième, dixième, onzième ou douzième année d'accepter que le premier, deuxième semestre donne un programme de gymnase dans chacun de ses semestres ?

M. Proulx : Oui. Ce qui arrive, c'est que dans certains cas, au lieu de prendre quatre cours et quatre cours, il y a certaines matières qui sont données à longueur de toute l'année. C'est un crédit qui est donné sur toute l'année plutôt qu'un crédit qui est donné de septembre à janvier, par exemple.

M. Bisson : Je vous remercie. Mon collègue M. Marchese a des questions.

M. Marchese : Merci, Gilles. J'apprécie le fait que M. Bisson voulait faire ses questions en français, mais je pense que ce sera plus facile pour moi de le faire en anglais. Merci, Gilles Bisson.

Hon Mrs Ecker: I was expecting Italian.

Mr Bisson: You should.

M. Marchese : Ce n'est pas accepté ici. But I do want to say that unilingualism can be cured.

Hon Mrs Ecker: Yes, I know. I have heard it's not a fatal disease.

Mr Marchese: I've got a couple of questions, but please if you've already answered them, don't. Just tell me.

Do you know or does your staff know how many students there are in the private school system, both religious and non-denomination schools?

Hon Mrs Ecker: We have approximate figures of the registration in independent schools.

Mr Marchese: Do they have a number?

Hon Mrs Ecker: Yes.

Mr Marchese: Religious versus non-denominational.

Hon Mrs Ecker: Religious versus non-denominational, we're just double-checking. While we're looking that up, was there another aspect of your question just while they look that up for you?

Mr Marchese: We just finished debating Bill 45.

Hon Mrs Ecker: There are about 102,000 students in independent schools who are registered with the ministry. But the question is whether we have the breakdown between denominational schools or not.

Ms Herbert: Our current figures show us that of private schools who are registered, 329 have religious affiliations, and total non-religious affiliations are 393, for a total of 722.

1710

Mr Marchese: Right. In terms of student population, these non-religious—

Ms Herbert: The student population?

Mr Marchese: Yes. How many are there?

Ms Herbert: Non-religious? There are 59,966.

Mr Marchese: And the others have the difference. So it's fair to say that the bulk of the dollars for the tax credit is likely to go, obviously, to non-denominational schools.

Hon Mrs Ecker: That would depend on parents.

Mr Marchese: It would depend on the parents?

Hon Mrs Ecker: It would depend on the choice of parents.

Mr Marchese: But at the moment that's the distribution.

Hon Mrs Ecker: Of students in schools, but the use of the tax credit, of course, will depend on parental choices. The other thing about some of the schools that might well be sort of non-denominational, they might also be schools that respect particular cultural approaches to learning or other kinds of learning strategies. I think one of the best examples, since I have many of them in Durham region, are Montessori schools, which have a particular kind of approach to learning.

Mr Marchese: I understand that too. I just wanted to point out that Mr John Hastings was talking about how the opposition has been making light of the fact that a lot of the money that you will be giving for tax credits is going to rich people, and he just wanted to simply say that's not the case. I just wanted to argue that a whole lot of rich people are going to get a tax credit that they really haven't been asking for. The one example I give is Upper Canada College, where they pay \$16,000 for tuition fees, and if they bunk down there they have to pay \$28,000. I think these people are fairly rich, wouldn't you say?

Hon Mrs Ecker: No, I wouldn't say that, because I think that's an assumption on our critics' part. From what I have heard from parents, and seen, many of the parents who do choose to send their children to independent schools are not what I would call, to use the term in quotes, "rich." Many of them are lower-middle-class. Some of them make considerable financial sacrifices, at least some of the ones I've met over the couple of years. So I don't think that's a fair assumption.

Mr Marchese: I appreciate that.

The Vice-Chair: I think your time is up now, Mr Marchese. I know you're just getting into it, but your 20 minutes is up.

Mr Marchese: You're kidding.

The Vice-Chair: Yes, it's so exciting.

Mr Marchese: Madam Ecker, no opportunity to chat today.

Hon Mrs Ecker: Well, don't go away.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I was enjoying listening to Mr Marchese as well, the flight of fancy there, whatever.

Thank you, Minister. It's my pleasure, and certainly a very important issue for all of us. I know what a champion you are of the public education system. Certainly in Durham, when we meet with the Durham boards as well as the other two boards that are certainly represented in my riding, I hear repeatedly questions—and I'm not trying in any way to put you on the spot here, because I know you're from Durham as well, but the whole issue of extracurricular activities has been a huge issue in the riding. I was very impressed with the support for the co-instructional task force, which was the attempt to resolve these extracurricular activities. I heard from many of my constituents, and some, arguably, may have

been your constituents, that they were pleased that you supported the recommendations. I can only say for my part that, as you probably know, I have a daughter who teaches in secondary, and extracurricular is very important to young people.

I know that there's been some flexibility provided in the additional funding that you added to education. I think there was a specific amount outlined that was to try to solve this problem with some other flexibility arrangements. Perhaps you could share, not just with me, of course, but with the other members of the committee on both sides here, the anticipated solution this September to the extracurricular activity and the support we received from the Organization for Quality Education. Certainly they spoke at some length for the support of the co-instructional task force, and, as they said, it still comes up. I would say, though, from everything I hear—and I pay very close attention to the students I hear from and the parents I hear from—they want you to solve it. They don't want to get immersed with having a disagreement with the individual teacher organization, or something, that may be trying to put a barrier in front of this.

With the steps you've taken, clearly, I suspect that some of that's in the current bill. Bill 80 may be one of the mechanisms as well that provides some stability for the students and arguably for the whole educational community. Perhaps, as I pose the question, you could help us understand your aspirations, your hopes for a solution to the extracurricular activities specifically and, in a general sense, the steps you've taken to introduce some flexibility in this funding mechanism. It's part of the \$360 million, I understand that, but I know you'll need some time to have other members hear a complete and comprehensive response to what for all of us has been a serious challenge. There may be other agendas at stake here too in terms of, what is the goal here? Is more money going to solve the problem or is there something else behind this resistance to provide extracurricular activities? I'm just wondering if you could maybe respond to that in a general sense.

Hon Mrs Ecker: Thank you very much, Mr O'Toole. You and I, sharing ridings in Durham region, have seen how unfortunate the circumstance is when some teachers have chosen to work to rule so that students are denied the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities. I should point out, however, that it is very important to note, and I go out of my way to say it on a regular basis, that we also have many thousands of teachers who have not, who see their job very clearly as providing services such as that for students, because they recognize, as I recognize, the importance of that kind of co-instructional or extracurricular activity. It helps students learn better in many cases. It's something that both students and teachers enjoy doing. It can for senior students give them skills or networking opportunities that might actually help them in terms of jobs in later life or give them opportunities at scholarships for post-secondary education. So there's a lot of value to these activities and it is a service that students deserve from the education system.

But, as I said, unfortunately in some schools around the province we have seen that when there were political or labour fights of one kind or another, these activities tended to be withdrawn.

The task force that we appointed earlier this year consulted extensively with all of our partners, parents and students, and made a series of recommendations. Those recommendations were greeted with great support, a great consensus actually around the recommendations. So we were very pleased to move forward with them. What the recommendations asked were for every party, if you will, all the education partners, to be prepared to compromise. Everyone said they would. So the package of initiatives that I announced in May to implement those recommendations is indeed not only a significant package to accept the recommendations but also, I believe, a compromise that, if all of the parties do what they said they would do, should remove any excuse for not having extracurricular activities this fall.

A couple of things about how we did that: first of all, as you say, we did increase the amount of money available for school boards. There was an additional \$50 million that was part of that announcement which school boards could use flexibly according to their priorities. They could use it, for example, to assist in this area if they needed to or if there were some other priorities that they had. We also took the workload, the instructional time, classroom time, standard of four hours and 10 minutes and did two things with it. First, we included as part of that definition teacher activities that hadn't been included before, for example supervision, when a teacher was supervising students at a particular activity, or when a teacher might be filling in for an absent colleague—the term used is “on call”; also, remediation activity, when a teacher is involved in extra help for students. So those were some of the things that will be included this fall, if the legislation is passed, to recognize the other tasks and duties that teachers have to do.

The second thing we did with that was to give schools and school boards more flexibility so that in timetabling they could actually recognize the fact that a teacher who was doing extracurricular activities is indeed incurring an extra workload and that they could accommodate that teacher, be flexible in scheduling and timetabling, so that teacher would have less other work, if you will, in order to do extracurricular activities. So I think that was a very significant change.

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We will also, subject to passage of the legislation, be requiring school boards to put in place plans every year to provide extracurricular activities. We are also proposing to withdraw from previous legislation the requirement that it would have been mandatory for teachers to participate, so that it remains voluntary.

There are some other things we are doing, allowing school boards to take away some of the other barriers that school boards perhaps had in terms of other volunteers, because it needs to be a mix—not just teachers, but teachers and volunteers. Also, if school boards need

additional teachers or additional resources, they can acquire that by taking the average class size up by up to one student in high school.

I think it has been a significant package. It's focused on where the problem is at the high school level, and again, it's public high schools where the concerns have been. In elementary schools, those teachers have been very good at providing what students need without getting into those sorts of disputes that some of their public high school colleagues have.

Mr O'Toole: I appreciate that—

The Vice-Chair: I just wanted to cue Mr Wettlaufer—

Mr O'Toole: I just wanted the time to finish off, if I may, and I certainly will give time to Mr Wettlaufer. I wanted to compliment you, because I believe in the compromise. Also, moving away from the mandatory volunteerism argument was extremely important and a strong gesture, I think, in symbolism and in reality.

Just one more point on decreasing the animation between the government, arguably, and the union. You might know that the latest volley of gunshots has been heard from the Durham District School Board, withdrawing, through pink slips, the teachers who participated in summer school. This is one more attempt to keep the temperature up, dislocating students and parents, causing a great deal of inconvenience for students who wanted to finish their high school requirements over the summer. I think it's a very selfish, self-interested kind of motive. Are there any steps within the ministry's mandate to deal with this pink slip, whether telling teachers, as reprisal for participating in summer school—it's just inexcusable in my view.

On the other hand, I want to compliment the Durham separate board. They have taken up the challenge now to provide that. Those students are going to have to reapply to another board and that will create some problems for them. Is this not just exacerbating? Yet, as I've just said, you have tried to compromise. What compromise are we hearing from the other side, if any? Not just the pink slip issue, but I'm trying to finish out the discussion on this whole—

Hon Mrs Ecker: I think, first of all, what's happening currently in Durham region is another example of a fight between a union and a school board and, again, over what issues? The material has gone out. Parents are saying to me, "What are they talking about?" So it's unclear what the issues are, but again, the union is having a fight with the school board and they're threatening to take action against any teacher who takes a job with that school board. Parents consider that absolutely unacceptable, because what it has done potentially in Durham region is to take away from students the opportunity to get extra help from the summer schools.

Actually, what's even more ironic about it is that those summer schools, those summer institutes, are sponsored and paid for. The ministry pays for them, the federation. It's a partnership between the teacher union and the ministry, who put it on for students. Also, we have some

for teachers as well, recognizing that that's an important obligation for us and recognizing the need. But here we have a case where they are taking a step that is threatening to deny students this opportunity. It has been because of the co-operation between the public board and the Catholic board that students will be able to continue to have those opportunities. It's that kind of activity that I think parents just find absolutely unbelievable. Why would their students suffer because of that kind of fight or dispute?

I've been very clear. I recognize that various education organizations and education partners may not agree with the government of the day. That's not an unusual thing. The teacher unions fought the Bill Davis Tories, they fought the David Peterson Liberals, they fought the Bob Rae New Democrats and now they're fighting our government. That's not an unusual activity for a teacher union and that's part of the democratic process. If they don't like the government, they're free to go out and express that in any number of ways. But doing it in the classroom, doing it in a way that takes away an opportunity for students—parents just do not support that.

That's one of the reasons why the legislation we have before the House now is proposing to have three-year collective agreements, to take one step—and it is only one step—to try to have a little more stability on the labour side for students and parents.

Mr Wettlaufer: Minister, I was very intrigued by Mr Bisson's question relating to grade 13 and your response that Ontario is the only jurisdiction in which we had five years of high school. It brought back a little personal experience, if I may share some of that anecdotal information with you.

My niece transferred to Alberta five years ago and, lo and behold, she found that she was more than one year behind in her math, more than one year behind in her science and nearly a year behind in many of the other subjects she was taking. She required special tutoring in order to get up to the level that Alberta was.

I think you will recall some 30-odd years ago that Ontario's education system was considered to be the best in North America.

Mr Mazzilli: I wasn't born then.

Mr Wettlaufer: Mr Mazzilli says he wasn't born yet. That's a possibility. I was.

We had an enviable education system. But 10 years ago, I was in business and I can recall hiring people who did not know how to write proper grammatical structure. Their spelling was hideous. I spoke to professors and to the president of the University of Waterloo at the time—I believe it was Burt Matthews then—and what we found from all these discussions was that many of the students who were entering university out of five years of high school did not possess the literacy level out of Ontario that they did out of other jurisdictions.

Five years ago, or perhaps four years ago, I was at a meeting with Jim Downey, who was then president of the University of Waterloo, and Jim Downey said, "Wayne,

the changes your government is undertaking in education are so long overdue that the universities have welcomed this with open arms.”

There is this positive co-relationship between student testing and student achievement. This comes right from the educational experts at the universities. I don't know if we are seeing any results yet. If we are, I wonder if you could share those with us.

Hon Mrs Ecker: Actually, you're quite correct that it was the lack of basic skills for our students that caused us, as a party and then as a government, to say that we needed to change the way the education system was functioning, to have a better curriculum, which is being phased into place. It's in the elementary schools and it's continuing to be phased into high schools. The focus of that curriculum is on very important foundation skills: literacy, mathematical and scientific skills.

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On things like the TIMSS test we are starting to see Ontario go up in the rankings, if you will. For example, in math, in 1995 Canada ranked 13th; in 1999 Canada ranked ninth out of 26 countries. The significance in the increase has been because of Ontario students. Again, in science, in 1995 Canada was 14th; in 1999 Canada was 11th. Ontario and Quebec were the only two provinces to improve significantly since 1995, and Ontario was the major reason for Canada's significant improvement.

We're also see in EQAO results, the Education Quality and Accountability Office, which is the independent, arm's-length body which is phasing in the testing program here in Ontario, a 13% increase in the number of grade 3 English students achieving the provincial standard in math and an increase for French students. There have been others. I'm going down the list here: a 10-percentage-point increase in French writing results etc.

We are starting to see the gains in student outcome. We're still in the early days, obviously. People like to criticize the government and say we've done too much too fast, but the phasing in of the curriculum is still not complete yet. We have grade 11 coming this next year, grade 12 the next year.

The first step was to change the curriculum, to put in place something that was more rigorous, had our students learning more of what they needed. The second step was to put in place testing so that we could start to have benchmarks, good, valid, credible data. That is starting to come in.

The third piece now is to start setting improvement targets and put strategies in place to meet those targets, and we started by asking schools to do it with grade 3 reading results and putting in place more money and more training and more supports so those schools can meet those targets. It's an important step, a significant shift in culture for the system, a shift that is starting to have payoffs, but we've got a long way to go.

Mr Wettlaufer: One brief follow-up: one of the concerns that a number of the students have had in my riding is the grade 10 literacy test. They're wondering, if

they fail it, can they retake it, and what supports are in place for them?

Hon Mrs Ecker: Yes, the grade 10 literacy test, again we phased that in, so this past year was sort of a trial run. Next year it will count, and students are allowed to take the test as many times as they need to. It is a graduate requirement, so we think it's appropriate that they have more than one opportunity. We put in place before the test was started significant new resources for school boards targeted to remediation in grades 7 to 10 for this. We changed the rules for this coming school year to make it more generous, easier for boards to use the money for this kind of activity. So we've put resources there.

The other piece that is important is that we saw, not surprisingly, that the grade 10 literacy results were not terrific, and that is because that is a snapshot of what the system was like, what the students were doing, what they were coming out with. They were coming out with literacy skills that were not appropriate, so that's what we are changing.

The Vice-Chair: The Liberals have 20 minutes.

Mr Kennedy: Thank you, Mr Chair. I appreciate the opportunity.

Minister, in part of the discussion from yesterday there was a little vagueness in the response that you and your staff gave around the idea of student-centred funding. Every document you have talks about how your funding is student-centred. If you look at your line-by-line envelopes, every one of them depends on the number of students, with the possible exception of teacher compensation. Yesterday there was some vagueness introduced to the idea that if boards lose students, they're going to lose funds. You introduced, again, an idea that some boards lost students and didn't lose funds.

We examined that and most of those boards, indeed a large number of them, did lose money. For example, the Grand Erie District School Board lost students and it lost money. That's what happened. It happened because your funding formula is tied to that. If you remember our discussion yesterday, there was some reluctance to identify just how much of that money will leave with the student because that's what the private school voucher, of course, will occasion. Even notwithstanding studies, you're giving an incentive—and an incentive has never been to discourage something, it's always to encourage something—and Grand Erie could very well lose more students and therefore will lose more money.

So I wonder, Minister, if you or your staff could acknowledge for us—again, we certainly acknowledge the authority sitting in front of us. We really would like to have you be a little more definitive. Our determination is that roughly 95% of your allocation this year, again, save and except the teacher compensation, is tied to the number of people. We're happy to have it, in writing preferably. But I'm wondering, given the intervening day, are you able to identify for us the percentage that is tied to the number of students and make that part of the public record today?

Hon Mrs Ecker: First of all, let's make sure the record is correct here. The Grand Erie board, based on projected enrolment and projected funding for this upcoming school year, despite the fact that they have a projected enrolment decrease, a quite significant decrease, they have an increase in revenue. So despite the fact they're having fewer students anticipated this year, we're giving them more dollars. I think that's an important point to recognize, because that is how we have been funding the education system.

The second point in answer to Mr Kennedy's question is that when you go down through the different grants, just about every grant has requirements in it that are not dependent on how many students. For example, let's look at special education. The funding can change in special education based on the changes in a student's needs during the course of a student's life, so that more money can be available for a student because they have higher needs. It can go up. In the foundation grant, funding can change depending on which panel a student is in. It's lower in elementary than it is for secondary, an issue which we've been trying to redress for elementary teachers, I should add. The geographic circumstances grants are variable outside of enrolment: the remoteness, the number of small schools, the distance from an urban centre, distance between schools. There are a number of funding components that do not depend totally on student enrolment. Obviously student enrolment is a significant factor. We've never claimed anything to the contrary.

Mr Kennedy: Minister, I know you're here to elucidate and not obfuscate. I know, for example, when you talk about the Grand Erie board—and I think the member is present—you'll want to acknowledge the operating purposes grant is down from \$198.483 million to \$196.889 million, so that we want to make sure that nobody goes away with the impression—

Hon Mrs Ecker: If you're elucidating, you should use accurate numbers, Mr Kennedy. The projected revenue for this school board is up, not down.

Mr Kennedy: Madam Minister, we're discussing here exactly the implication of student-based funding. And we're not talking about capital grants; we're talking about operating. They're your figures. They're published on the Web site and the people from—

Hon Mrs Ecker: You can't be, on the one hand—here you go again: "Let's pick the numbers to make my argument."

Mr Kennedy: Minister, you can rant and you can—

The Vice-Chair: Order.

Hon Mrs Ecker: That's what you're doing.

Mr Kennedy: You can take the Algoma board, the Bluewater board, any of the boards that are being cut.

Thank you, Mr Chair; a timely intervention. I'm sure the minister didn't mean to get off the topic.

Minister, in the Ontario Gazette, the regulations this year show the instrumentality of per pupil funding. I'm going to again ask you the question, because I think the people who are watching understand that you have access to all this fine staff and so forth. The question was asked

yesterday. I think people would probably deem it reasonable that you're able to give us a fairly precise understanding, if students are lost to this private school voucher, of how much money will leave with them.

I'm proposing to you that by your own formula—of course, it does depend on other factors, but the existence of a pupil is the key element that you've changed here—the student-centred funding makes it vary by rote, and I would suggest that it's about 95%. I'd be happy if you would table figures or at least give us the indication of what your preferred amount is, so that this is elucidating and not getting in the way of people understanding.

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Hon Mrs Ecker: First of all, let's correct the record. The Grand Erie board is receiving more money, not less, even now.

Mr Kennedy: Operating money, Minister?

Hon Mrs Ecker: They are receiving more money from the school board. You can't—

Mr Kennedy: Minister, why are you—

The Vice-Chair: Order.

Hon Mrs Ecker: Mr Chair, if he would let me finish. You can't say, "Let's only count part of the money we give them so we can make the Liberal argument that the school board is getting less money."

Mr Kennedy: The money that will be in the classroom, Minister.

Hon Mrs Ecker: They are getting money for classrooms, for administration, for transportation, for a whole range of things.

Mr Kennedy: Less of all of those items, Minister.

Hon Mrs Ecker: That is above, by the way, the enrolment decrease they are projected to have, and that is something.

Mr Kennedy: Minister, could you answer my question, or are you not able to answer my question?

Hon Mrs Ecker: So I think it's important that we correct that fact first, before we get into the questions.

Mr Kennedy: Minister, you haven't corrected anything, but could you answer the question?

Hon Mrs Ecker: Mr Kennedy is asking, can we break apart the grants? The grants have not been designed to be broken apart in that fashion. We've been very clear, but whether staff can do that, I don't know. Certainly they can take a look at whether that is possible to do in time here for estimates. We've always said student enrolment is significant, but we have also said that we are funding above that, because we think that's an important investment to make.

Mr Kennedy: Minister, you've again eluded the answer to the question that stands square in front of you. Last year you were unabashedly praising the idea that it's all tied to enrolment. You said that a number of times during estimates. I can understand why you're a little more reluctant this year, because, Minister, you're going to have to concede what is fairly evident to everyone else, that when your private school voucher comes in, it will be withdrawing funds from the schools.

I don't wish to underestimate the expertise that you've marshalled before us today. I see some 12 or 15 very capable staff, senior staff, I'm sure, supporting your efforts here today. I am sure that those numbers, if they're to be had, will be forthcoming. In the wonderful simplification that you promised us this year and last year in your formula, I'm sure, again, it won't obfuscate a very straightforward question: how much money, Minister, is going to be lost every time a child is induced to leave? I'll leave that question with you, because I've given you three opportunities now to answer between today and yesterday.

Minister, I want to focus on a different part of this. Earlier in my questioning—

Hon Mrs Ecker: That's because the government, Mr Kennedy, has been increasing public education funding.

Mr Kennedy: Minister, earlier today, when asked about how many schools, and you identified that the majority of students in a position to benefit from the private school voucher are indeed not in religious schools but rather in secular schools, you said that who would benefit would be determined by parental choice, and you gave the implication that they may choose not to apply because they have certain learning things that they want to do. Now you're here and we have a marvellous opportunity, because the bill isn't passed yet. You're the Minister of Education. You have your own considerable knowledge and the expertise of the officials. I wonder if you would tell us today what the conditions should be in Bill 45, sections 40 and 41. How should those be stipulated in the regulations, if must be? What would you, as the Minister of Education, recommend to the Minister of Finance be the conditions put on either the pupils or the schools or the eligible families or the eligible parts of tuition? In your work on behalf of public education, what kinds of conditions would you put on the private school tax credit? Do you have those conditions you could share with us today?

Hon Mrs Ecker: In terms of some of the other points that you've made as well here, and we'll take them one at a time, first of all, no one is proposing, that I am aware of, other than our critics, that money be taken from the public schools to be given to independent schools. So that's the first thing; I wish to make that clear.

Mr Kennedy: Minister, I'm sorry. Could you address the question I've raised?

Hon Mrs Ecker: I think that's important to make clear, because no one is taking money away from the public education system for independent schools.

The second point is that the Liberal critic makes an assumption that there are going to be a mass exodus from the public education system. It may come as a surprise to him that we have many excellent schools in our public education system that parents choose to send their children to because they think they are doing a good job for their children. So I think that should be also on the record. I do find it offensive that the Liberal critic keeps assuming that there's going to be hordes of parents

fleeing excellent schools in the public system. I believe that we have many excellent schools here.

Mr Kennedy: Minister, I wonder if I could interrupt your rhetorical flight and directly ask again the question—

Hon Mrs Ecker: It's not a rhetorical flight, Mr Kennedy.

The Vice-Chair: Order.

Hon Mrs Ecker: You keep talking about, there's going to be this great exodus, and that's my answer.

Mr Kennedy: Minister, this is a questioning period and you are honour-enjoined to answer questions.

The Vice-Chair: Order. Just one at a time, please.

Mr Kennedy: Minister, I asked you a very straightforward question. I asked you what conditions you would put on the private school voucher. It is laid out in fairly plain and bare form in sections 40 and 41 of Bill 45. I'm wondering, in your capacity as the chief executive of public education in this province, do you have recommendations, do you have conditions that you think are in the public interest that should be put upon this tax credit? Minister, you can answer no, but please don't take up any more of my time with other answers.

Hon Mrs Ecker: Mr Kennedy, if you hadn't interrupted me, I was getting to that point. You made a number of points in your previous question—

Mr Kennedy: It's not a debate, Minister; it's a question.

Hon Mrs Ecker:—and I do think it's important—

Mr O'Toole: He's interrupting. I'm so sick and tired of his rudeness.

Mr Kennedy: You won't take any of my time, Mr O'Toole. Control yourself.

Hon Mrs Ecker: As the Liberal critic knows, the legislation has been out for public hearings on the content of the legislation. There will also be consultation occurring around the regulations, and I don't think it's appropriate for me as a minister, or any minister, to start saying to those individuals who want to put their view forward, "No, you can talk about this, but you can't talk about that." I don't think it's fair to prejudge that. The government will be making decisions about the regulations and how they're worded and what will be included in them based on the consultations that will occur. I think that's a due diligent thing for any government to do.

Mr Kennedy: Yesterday you had no research to share with us. You haven't even studied the impact of this. So it wouldn't be particularly necessary—

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

Mr Kennedy: Then let me quickly find out. Do you have any studies, maybe from yesterday to today, that have been undertaken that you're prepared to table for the benefit of this committee that is charged to look at the functions of your ministry? Have you any studies completed on the impact of this school voucher upon public education? Do you have any?

Hon Mrs Ecker: As I said yesterday to Mr Kennedy, we looked at the experience in other jurisdictions—

Mr Kennedy: Can you table any of that today?

Hon Mrs Ecker:—concerned with the experience that they had in terms of exodus of students. We also had much material that parents and other groups—

Mr Kennedy: You did no research of your own, though.

Hon Mrs Ecker:—sent to the government. With all due respect to Mr Kennedy, I think it's important for us to look at material that citizens want to provide for us in support of their particular position. So the answer to that question yesterday—

Mr Kennedy: But I think it's startling that they can't be guided by the Minister of Education and the Ministry of Education, which have statutory responsibility to provide them with some expertise and some insight as to what the challenges might be.

Minister, you've said to us today that there are no conditions you're prepared to make public at this time that you recommend, and that is your particular choice to discharge your responsibilities. I think many people out there—

Hon Mrs Ecker: No, that's not what I said, Mr Kennedy.

Mr Kennedy:—would look to you for guidance, Madam Minister, and you're saying that you're not going to provide that to us today.

Hon Mrs Ecker: I said, if you're interested in listening, that I think it's appropriate—the government has said they are consulting on this matter. I think it's important for us to listen to what those consultations say before the government makes decisions. Now, that may not be the way the honourable member wishes to proceed, but I think that's a courtesy and a due diligence that a government should do.

Mr Kennedy: The Minister of Finance has been very clear. He favours very few conditions. He's had no such reticence. But nobody's speaking up for public education and saying, "Here's what needs to be done to minimize the damage this will do."

Minister, if you've got your head in the sand, if you believe there are no negative impacts, if you've done no studies and you have no recommendations, then I guess you have nothing to do with this private school voucher.

I want to turn, then, and ask a question through you to your staff—

The Vice-Chair: I would like to intervene quickly here. The bells are ringing for a 10-minute vote. We've got about three more minutes. At five minutes to, I will adjourn at that time and your time would end.

Mr Kennedy: Thank you, Mr Chair.

I'd like to know, Madam Minister: Mr Gooch made some assertions yesterday and I'm wondering, because the opportunity wasn't provided at that time, if we could speak to Mr Gooch directly or through your auspices around those particular assertions.

Hon Mrs Ecker: First of all, Mr Kennedy, we were quite happy to have Mr Gooch speak to you at great length. You didn't want to take advantage of the opportunity. But we'd be quite happy to—

Mr Kennedy: Well, not during your time here, Minister.

Hon Mrs Ecker:—do that as part of the committee here.

Mr Kennedy: If the government would nominate some other time, I'll be happy to take it up.

Hon Mrs Ecker: Oh, there we go. Let's ask for the information from an official, allege that somehow or other there's been something to stop it—he makes the offer to do it and then he doesn't take advantage of it.

Mr Kennedy: Minister, I'm not running the clock on all the time you're wasting, but it is obvious and it will be obvious on the record.

Now, Mr Gooch—

Hon Mrs Ecker: You know, Mr Chair, it's interesting. We've had questions here from the NDP—

Mr Kennedy: Mr Gooch, I'd like to draw your attention—

Hon Mrs Ecker:—we've had questions from my members. We've answered them fairly, openly. There have not been disputes or fights. There have not been disputes or fights when other Liberals have asked questions—

Mr Kennedy: Minister, I aspire to that standard of response from you as well.

Hon Mrs Ecker: But this particular individual seems to have a way of doing it—

Interjections.

Mr Kennedy: Mr Gooch, I wonder if I could draw your attention to the student-focused funding—

Mr Mazzilli: On a point of order, Mr Chair: The proper procedure is to have the question go to the minister, and the minister can send it off to one of her staff, but not directly. He does not have that right—

The Vice-Chair: It's a point of order, but again—

Mr Kennedy: In point of fact to this point of order, through you, Mr Chair, I direct my questions to the people being put forward and I'm happy to continue to do so.

Mr Mazzilli: To the minister.

Mr Kennedy: Through you, Mr Chair, my question is, there was an assertion made yesterday around a particular item and it is identified in the student-focused funding booklet that's available on the Web site, and a particular one-time phase-in payment was referred to by Mr Gooch yesterday and I appreciated his information, but I wonder if I can draw his attention to that. He identified the \$267 million which in every other year of presentation, phase-in payments, which are by definition short-term payments lasting over a few years, were part of the operating grant for operating purposes. Suddenly it was restated and \$267 million was taken out, as was \$39,720,000 for heating. I want to focus specifically on the phase-in grant. The ministry made an arrangement, if I'm not mistaken, with several boards, and you said so yesterday. These boards did not put this in the bank and not spend it, but instead I have in front of me what the various boards spent it on. Mr Gooch, or Minister—and

through you, Mr Chair—they spent these funds substantially on their operating costs in the year 2000-01. I have the individual breakdowns for each of the boards. For example, \$152 million was expended in the city of Toronto, and so forth.

The Vice-Chair: Order. Your time has run out. We have five more minutes to go, so the estimates stand adjourned until Tuesday after orders of the day. Thank you very much.

The committee adjourned at 1752.

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Hon Janet Ecker, Minister of Education	
Ms Sue Herbert, Deputy Minister	
M. Maurice Proulx, ministre adjoint, éducation en langue française et administration de l'éducation	

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Ms Tonia Grannum

Staff / Personnel

Ms Anne Marzalik, research officer,
Research and Information Services