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**Official Report  
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**Wednesday 5 October 2005**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Mercredi 5 octobre 2005**

**Standing committee on  
estimates**

Ministry of Citizenship  
and Immigration

Ontario Women's Directorate

**Comité permanent des  
budgets des dépenses**

Ministère des Affaires civiques et  
de l'Immigration

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féminine de l'Ontario

Chair: Cameron Jackson  
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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
ESTIMATESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES  
BUDGETS DES DÉPENSES

Wednesday 5 October 2005

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*The committee met at 0904 in room 151.*MINISTRY OF CITIZENSHIP  
AND IMMIGRATION

**The Chair (Mr. Cameron Jackson):** I'd like to call to order the standing committee on estimates. We are now convening to do seven and a half hours—

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity–Spadina):** After your comments—

**The Chair:** You'll let me start the hearings, won't you, Mr. Marchese?

**Mr. Marchese:** Of course. I wouldn't deprive you of that luxury.

**The Chair:** Thank you. I know you're excited about lunch, but we'll get to you by lunch.

From the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, I'm pleased to welcome the Honourable Mike Colle and Joan Andrew, his deputy minister. We're going to do seven and a half hours. As this committee is aware, there is a bit of an anomaly with the estimates and the way they are packaged. Within the estimates that we will be called upon to vote on at the end of our seven and a half hours for the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration is included the office for seniors and the office for women's issues. It's my understanding that both of those ministers are available on standby for this afternoon, should they be needed, and we appreciate that accommodation. I recognize that some of their senior staff are present in the room, if they are needed in the absence of the minister.

With that direction, if there are no questions, I know Mr. Marchese is so excited about discussing lunch today.

**Mr. Marchese:** Not excited, but with your indulgence, I would ask for unanimous consent for us to take, instead of a half-hour at 12 o'clock, an hour, because I've got a few commitments and that half-hour will simply not do it. Is that OK with the members?

**The Chair:** There are no problems with any of the members. Tomorrow we have approximately an hour remaining, so we'll have an hour and a half tomorrow to make up that half-hour tomorrow. So are there no problems with that?

**Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa–Orléans):** I just wish to add that in addition to women's issues, ADO is in there as well.

**The Chair:** OK. Thank you for that clarification. Are there any other questions? We've asked for unanimous

consent. Is there any objection? Seeing none, then we will recess at 12 o'clock and reconvene at 1 o'clock.

Now that we have the committee's business out of the way, Minister, welcome. You have up to 30 minutes for your opening statement. We're in your hands.

**Hon. Mike Colle (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's nice to be here, members of the committee.

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** Congratulations.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Thank you, Mr. O'Toole. I will begin.

I'm honoured to present the estimates of the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration for the year 2005-06. As you know, I have been the minister for just a few short months. Already, I have been impressed by the talent and dedication of our staff and our many community partners. It is truly a privilege to work with these exceptional people to help build a better Ontario. To my right here, I have my deputy minister, Joan Andrew. She's certainly well-versed in many of these areas and she will be available to support any questions that you have.

This ministry includes the citizenship and immigration division, as well as the Ontario Women's Directorate and the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat. My remarks will centre on my portfolio—citizenship and immigration—and also provide an overview of the two other areas.

My colleagues Minister Papatello, the minister responsible for women's issues, and Mr. Bradley, the minister responsible for seniors, will be here to respond to your comments and questions about their portfolios later in the proceedings.

Until the government reorganization this summer, this ministry also included the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario, which is now part of the Ministry of Community and Social Services. I will give an introduction to the accessibility file, which, I might add, matters deeply to this government. Minister Papatello, the Minister of Community and Social Services, will respond to the questions when she appears before you.

In addition, this ministry delivers regional and corporate services that support not only MCI programs but also those of some other ministries. I'll have a few words about these too. So we'll be touching on quite a few different topics during these proceedings. I'm looking forward to your comments and constructive debate and discussion.

Our vision: Our vision as a ministry is an Ontario where everyone participates, enjoys the social and economic benefits of life in this wonderful province and makes a contribution to the community. To achieve this vision, we work to maximize the social and economic benefits of immigration, build stronger communities by increasing civic involvement, break the cycle of violence against women, promote healthy aging for seniors and plan for the impact of an aging population.

Our government has a plan to strengthen our province by strengthening our most important competitive advantage—our people. It's a plan to strengthen the education and skills of our people, improve their health and invest in their prosperity. In the 21st century, the best jobs and the most investment will go to places with the best-educated and most highly skilled workforce. Immigration is a vital source of the skills and talents we need.

That's why, on June 29, the Premier gave the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration a stronger, more focused mandate. As the new minister, it is my job to ensure that Ontario leads the international competition for the world's best, brightest and willing workers, and does all it can to settle Canadians and integrate them into our society and economy.

**0910**

Of course, Canada has traditionally benefited from immigration. In fact, more than one in four Canadians, including one in four Ontarians, were born outside of Canada. Amazingly, 44% of Torontonians are foreign-born. We are a country and a province of immigrants.

We can all think of success stories of immigrants who came to Canada with little or nothing but a couple of suitcases and \$20 in their pockets, yet they've made a huge contribution to Canadian life and Ontario life. Immigrants have been indispensable in building the wonderful province we enjoy. Immigration has made Ontario one of the most diverse societies in the world. Without a doubt, people are our greatest asset, and the diversity of our people is one of our greatest strengths.

Today, more than half of all immigrants to Canada settle within Ontario's border, more than 125,000 newcomers a year. That's almost like a population the size of Prince Edward Island arriving on our doorstep every 12 months in Ontario, about 2,400 people per week. We've got people here from about 170 countries, who speak more than 300 different languages, and they understand every culture and have ties with almost every market. Our diversity makes us strong and makes us competitive. It is our gateway to talent, to potential, to a global presence and to making Ontario the place to be for years to come.

So if we have long benefited from immigration and diversity and it is an enormous strength, why have immigration issues taken on such urgency lately? Why does the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration need a new mandate?

As I see it, there are two big trends behind the new urgency. One is demographic. Our birth rate is relatively low and the baby boom generation is approaching re-

tirement—an aging workforce. These facts of life mean we must look increasingly to immigration if we're to keep our workforce growing. Immigrants now represent 70% of the net labour market growth in Ontario, and five years from now they're projected to account for all net new growth in the labour force.

A second trend is the increasing sophistication of today's economy. We have a knowledge economy now, one that places a premium on brains rather than brawn. Immigrants offer the right skills for this new reality. Nearly three in four adult immigrants to Ontario are highly skilled and have at least some post-secondary education or training. I think about 70% of them have some kind of post-secondary education or training.

Ontario businesses understand this, as the Canadian Federation of Independent Business reports, "Nearly 50% of small firms experiencing shortages of qualified labour are tapping into every source of talent, including hiring newcomers to Ontario who bring unique skills and experience to the workplace."

The bottom line is that we need immigrants because the know-how of a skilled workforce is the competitive advantage of the 21st century. But another reality is that we can no longer take immigration for granted. Other advanced countries face the same demographic projections that we do, and they have reached the same conclusion: Immigration is an economic imperative. They are actively competing to recruit new immigrants. I saw yesterday where the province of Alberta has undertaken an aggressive plan to recruit new immigrants for their workforce.

This is competition. We have to compete aggressively and win if we're to keep our people and our economy strong. I believe the best way to win is to keep skilled immigrants coming, to ensure that Ontario is a true land of opportunity, and to make sure Ontario's newcomers have every opportunity to succeed and build a better life for themselves and their families. That is a priority for our government.

As minister, my purpose is clear: to make sure that Ontario's newcomers get off to the best start possible. We know that, the better newcomers do, the better off we are as a province. When they succeed, Ontario succeeds. It's simple. That's why we're helping skilled immigrants overcome barriers, and helping newcomers with their language skills, Canadian work experience and recognition of their academic credentials will help them get off to a better start.

The federal-provincial agreement: That's why Premier McGuinty has put funding for settlement programs in the forefront of his campaign to close the \$23-billion gap with the federal government; \$23 billion is the difference between what Ontario sends to Ottawa in revenue and what they get back in services.

Last May, the Premier fought successfully to secure a fair share for Ontario's newcomers. The deal reached by the Prime Minister and the Premier will quadruple the amount Ottawa spends in Ontario for immigrant services over the next five years, from a total of about \$819 that

they invest in newcomer services at the present time to an eventual level of \$3,400 per newcomer annually. Ontario and federal officials have been negotiating the legal agreement supporting the increased federal investment to help immigrants get off to a good start. Ontario's goal in these negotiations is to see that this fair funding makes a real difference for the newcomers.

Soon I expect to become the first Ontario citizenship minister ever to sign an immigration agreement with the federal government. This will be a day of celebration, for as I've been saying, immigration has never been more important to our future. In today's knowledge economy, people are our most valuable asset. It's our skilled and diverse workforce that gives us an edge.

While both the federal and provincial governments offer some similar services or complement each other's services, there are differences in what we do. The federal government determines who comes and who stays in the country and provides some initial settlement services. The provincial government focuses on settlement and training. We want to help people understand Canadian traditions and laws and help them participate fully in our society and in our economy.

At the provincial level, we are stepping up the effort to capitalize on our diversity and realize the potential of our people. The challenge for our government is making sure that newcomers have access to language, job training and other programs they need in order to do well in Ontario. To help accomplish this, some immigration-related programs previously offered through other ministries are being consolidated within my Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration. For example, the access to professions and trades group has recently joined the ministry. Its goal is to remove barriers that keep internationally trained people from entering their fields in Ontario. My ministry is also assuming responsibility for adult English as a second language and French as a second language training.

By bringing related programs together, we are taking a new approach to immigration services. We are strengthening our settlement and integration support for newcomers so they can quickly begin contributing socially and economically to our province, and we are bringing a new intensity and focus to breaking down the barriers that prevent newcomers from reaching their full potential.

The Ontario government is playing a more active, enhanced role in helping newcomers by providing settlement, language training and labour market programs for immigrants. For example, in 2005-06, we are committing \$4.1 million to 79 community-based agencies across the province through the newcomer settlement program. These funds help non-profit community organizations to provide settlement, orientation, job-finding workshops and other services to tens of thousands of newcomers each and every year. As Mario Calla, the executive director of COSTI immigrant services, said in the news release that announced this funding, "With the support of the Ontario government, we are able to help newcomers

settle quickly and begin their new lives in our communities."

The ministry is also investing more than \$2 million this year on language interpreter services for newcomers. We are breaking down language barriers to provide non-English-speaking victims of domestic violence with access to the services they need. The language interpreter services program is the only one of its kind in Canada.

In Ontario, we embrace diversity. We are helping people reach their goals and build better lives for themselves and their families. We are building on our long-standing tradition of welcoming newcomers from around the globe by creating opportunities and helping immigrants prosper in their new home. By strengthening our people, we are strengthening our economy and our communities. We are making Ontario the place to be now and for a long time in the future.

Now let me turn to a second aspect of our mandate: our mission to strengthen Ontario communities by fostering civic involvement and promoting responsible citizenship. The ministry encourages more Ontarians, including youth, to volunteer, and we recognize individuals who have made extraordinary contributions to Ontario life.

Volunteerism is citizenship in action, and the volunteer sector is one of the pillars of Ontario society. Volunteers bring a special brand of caring. They are committed, hard-working individuals who make a remarkable personal investment in the communities they serve. Our annual Volunteer Service Awards honour volunteers' indispensable contributions. They recognize five, 10, up to 40 years, and 50-plus years of continuous service to a single organization. Youth are recognized for two or more years of service. All award winners are truly modern-day, unsung heroes.

#### **0920**

This year the theme of the program is "Volunteers Build Communities." We are saluting more than 8,000 volunteers in 39 ceremonies across the province. As well, we are presenting 17 Outstanding Achievement Awards for volunteerism to individuals, groups or businesses for superlative contributions to the volunteer sector. A selection committee consisting of community representatives chooses the recipients annually. In all, more than 2.3 million Ontario residents serve their neighbours and strengthen their communities by volunteering time, and that time is valued at almost \$6 billion a year, the equivalent of more than 200,000 full-time jobs. What they do is strengthen the fabric of Ontario's society, right down to the streets, right down to the neighbourhood.

We need to energize more volunteers, especially our newcomers and our youth. We have to find more ways to get people of all ages interested and involved. The ministry is committed to work with partners in the volunteer sector to do this. Our priority is to strengthen volunteer organizations themselves. For example, many groups want to make better use of Internet technology. So the ministry has gathered a range of tools, resources and best practices from more than 60 Internet projects funded by an earlier program, and we are sharing them

via the ministry Web site. Within government, the ministry has developed and leads a successful community of practice, bringing together provincial ministries and agencies that deal with the volunteer sector to look at common issues, such as liability insurance for non-profits.

Another priority is to place more emphasis on young volunteers. We're working with partners on strategies like promoting the value of volunteering through school-based programming, examining more formal community placement initiatives and helping the volunteer sector to effectively engage youth in their work. We'll continue to recognize the contributions of youth to their communities through such programs as the Lincoln Alexander Award for youth working to eliminate racial discrimination and the Lieutenant Governor's Community Volunteer Awards for students, as well as the annual Volunteer Service Awards and the Medal for Young Volunteers. Our goal in working with youth is to foster a commitment to volunteer service that will last a lifetime.

The ministry also organizes annual awards programs that recognize outstanding professional contributions to Ontario. The Order of Ontario, for example, honours those who have enriched the lives of others by attaining the highest standards of excellence and achievement in their respective fields. Last month, 29 awards were presented at an inspiring ceremony, bringing to over 400 the number of recipients since 1987, when the honour was first bestowed. The Volunteer Service Awards, the Order of Ontario and other awards programs encourage responsible citizenship by publicly saluting those who have made exceptional contributions to the common good.

Now I'd like to talk about one of the most significant achievements of the ministry over the past couple of years: the development of strong and effective legislation for Ontarians with disabilities. As you know, the landmark Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, legislation that will break down barriers for people with disabilities, was passed unanimously during the spring session and is now law. Under the act, accessibility will be achieved by developing and enforcing standards concerning goods, services, accommodation, facilities, buildings and employment. Improvements will be phased in, in stages of five years or less, moving toward an accessible Ontario in 20 years.

Accessibility standards will be established in both the public and private sectors to address the full range of disabilities, including physical, sensory, hearing, mental health, developmental and learning disabilities. These standards will be developed collaboratively. Representatives from the provincial government, industries or sectors, and people with disabilities will form committees to develop standards in each sector. The committees will submit proposed standards to the government for adoption as regulations. The standards will include timelines for compliance, and the legislation provides tough penalties for violators.

Members on all sides of the House agree that providing accessibility is fundamental to reach the full economic, social, cultural and human potential of our province. Our government will now move forward to implement this historic legislation and will make Ontario a world leader in improving accessibility for people with disabilities.

Next, I'd like to speak briefly about the role of the Ontario Women's Directorate. Last December, Premier McGuinty and Minister Papatello announced our government's comprehensive domestic violence action plan, a plan that encompasses 13 ministries. This plan will help prevent abuse before it happens and get women and children the support they need when it does happen. Our government is investing \$66 million over four years across ministries to enhance existing domestic violence programs and services and implement new initiatives.

The Ontario Women's Directorate, which had lead responsibility for coordinating the development of the action plan, is now coordinating and monitoring implementation across the government. I know that Minister Papatello would be happy to tell you more about some of the exciting components of this plan, such as the public education campaign aimed at boys and girls aged eight to 14 to promote healthy relationships.

I am pleased to tell you today that since the launch of the domestic violence action plan, we have implemented a number of important initiatives. We have increased funding to sexual assault centres for the first time in 13 years by investing \$1.9 million, bringing our total to \$12.5 million annually. This funding goes to 36 centres in 29 communities across the province. The increase also achieves equal funding for francophone centres and improves access to French-language support services.

We have invested an additional \$2.5 million in critical counselling services for hundreds of women and children who are victims of abuse. The funding builds on an existing \$22-million investment in counselling programs and is earmarked for shelters, second-stage housing providers, transitional housing support program providers and women's counselling agencies.

We have invested \$4.6 million to help mobilize communities to address violence against women. The funding covers 28 initiatives over three years. Half of these initiatives will target both children and youth, as well as the adults who influence them, and will deliver positive messages through everything from video games to workshops to tool kits to new materials for the classroom.

The other 14 initiatives will result in training for professionals to intervene earlier when they spot the signs of abuse. As Ontario's Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, as previously mentioned, I am particularly pleased that this action plan includes support for organizations that provide spoken-language interpretative services to victims of domestic violence who have limited proficiency in English.

Our \$1.9-million investment for this year will help victims of domestic violence gain better access to

shelters, legal and social services, health care and the domestic violence court system. We are also investing in a new, province-wide certificate program for spoken-language interpreters to be offered by community colleges. Our funding will be used to develop a curriculum that will set the standard for the skills that interpreters need to serve their clients well.

The final action plan initiative I'd like to talk about is the conference on domestic violence being held in Toronto this coming November, from the 28th to 30th. The conference is titled Finding Common Ground, and the theme is "Working Together to Reduce Domestic Violence." More than 70 speakers are booked to discuss innovative programs in addressing violence against women, from prevention to intervention to healing. The conference will feature a keynote address from Gloria Steinem, as well as speeches from both Minister Pupatello and Premier McGuinty.

As Premier McGuinty has said, women can't build the lives they deserve when they live with the threat of violence or the reality of physical and emotional abuse, and children can't reach their full potential when they fear what happens in their own homes.

We will not rest while this scourge of domestic violence remains in our communities.

Next on my list is the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat. The secretariat is helping Ontario get ready for the doubling of our senior population in the next 25 years. It has a mandate to undertake or support policy initiatives to improve seniors' quality of life and public education efforts for and about Ontario seniors. Partnership is crucial to the secretariat's work. It maintains a close working relationship with Ontario's nine largest seniors' organizations and works with them on both policy and public education activities. In the current year, the secretariat is continuing to plan for the impacts of an aging population and helping to educate seniors about healthy aging and the programs and services to which they are entitled.

Our priority is to expand the collaborative seniors' portal network, which brings together information and services from all three levels of government and makes them accessible through a single on-line gateway. That makes it much easier for seniors to find the supports they need to stay independent.

#### 0930

Regional services: Our front-line staff are found in communities across Ontario. The regional services branch delivers programs and services not only for citizenship and immigration, but also for three other ministries: tourism, culture and, on an interim basis, the sport and recreation branch of health promotion. In all, there are 22 regional offices co-located with other ministries around the province.

Our regional staff deliver programs to community organizations and tourism businesses, provide advice to client organizations in such areas as improving management and leadership skills and forming partnerships, provide consultation to potential applicants for various

government funding programs and build and foster relationships among sector stakeholders. The branch also processes approximately 2,000 grant applications for its client ministries worth \$60 million annually.

Here are a few examples of the positive impact that our regional staff are having in their communities. As part of the process of developing the new accessibility legislation, regional offices hosted community consultations and stakeholder information sessions to provide opportunities for public input; regional services worked with the Seniors' Secretariat to plan and organize seniors' information fairs across the province to educate seniors about healthy lifestyles and profile government resources and services; regional staff are active members of advisory committees and working groups that have planned and coordinated five municipal cultural planning forums across the province this year; our regional staff assisted in the development, piloting and launch of Tourism Inc., an interactive series of professional development and training sessions for tourism operators and service providers stressing a visitor-first approach; and they've facilitated projects that received communities in action fund grants, including Get Active Owen Sound, a local plan that includes social marketing strategies to increase physical activity rates. All in all, our regional services staff help make Ontario a great place to live and work by providing advice and support to a vast array of community stakeholder organizations.

Corporate services. Finally, I want to mention another area that supports the same group of ministries as regional services. I'm referring to the various corporate services that underpin all of our programs. They include financial and administrative services, technology and business solutions, legal services and human resources. These units are striving to ensure an efficient provision of corporate services through modern controllership, participating in supporting government-wide horizontal reviews on service integration and information technology, and to pursue strategies to increase effectiveness and contain costs.

To recap, the ministry is working to capitalize on Ontario's diversity by increasing newcomers' access to settlement services and helping immigrants participate in the labour force to their full potential; promoting responsible citizenship by nurturing the volunteer spirit and celebrating extraordinary contributions to life in the province; bringing closer the day when all women and children live without fear and violence in their homes; and creating knowledgeable seniors armed with the information they need for healthy aging.

These are goals the ministry cannot achieve on its own. We can make progress only through partnership. As Ontario's relatively new Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, I look forward to working with the province's diverse communities and to meeting the challenges we face. Together, we can build an Ontario that's the envy of the world. Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister. We'll now recognize Mr. Klees for up to 30 minutes.

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to start off by congratulating the minister on his appointment. We haven't had an opportunity to formally do that. I'm sure that as an immigrant himself, it is an assignment that he takes on gladly. I think all of us here share in many ways the objectives of his ministry as he has articulated them this morning.

I don't think there's a member here who would take exception with, first of all, the importance of immigration to Canada and to this province. I think that the objective of the government to assist immigrants in settlement, the objective of assisting foreign-trained professionals—whether it's a medical doctor or other trades or professions, it's important that we assist those who have made the decision to come to this country, to this province, to become integrated.

With regard to a number of the other programs that the ministry is undertaking, again, in intent and purpose, I'm one who will certainly do what I can to assist and to ensure that we achieve those objectives on behalf of the people they're intended to help.

Rather than taking any more time in a general nature, Mr. Chair, with your permission, I'd like to just go directly to some specific questions for the minister.

I'd like to start off, Minister, just by looking at the overall budget of your ministry, and I'd like your opinion. At first glance, we look at ministry spending, and we have a ministry administration line of some \$18,243,746 in terms of your budget. The overall budget for the entire ministry is put at some \$63 million. Minister, I'd like your assessment of the ratio of administrative costs in your ministry to actual front-line services. You referred, for example, to regional services, where all of the front-line people are and where services are actually delivered. That is some \$6,730,000. Your comments, please, regarding what appears to be an incredibly high ratio of administrative dollars being spent in your ministry.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Thank you very much, Mr. Klees. I just want to say that I know you come from the same roots that I do, from another country. I know that you care deeply about improving the potential for our newcomers, and I hope to work together with you in achieving that same goal.

In terms of your question about administrative costs, the way this ministry is structured, the ministry has corporate responsibilities that have remained with this ministry. So we provide corporate support for other ministries. We provide corporate support for the Ministry of Tourism, the ministry of francophone affairs and also for the Ministry of Culture. That's why it seems that the corporate expenditures are, let's say, a bit significant, because of those services we provide, plus the services we provide to those regional offices. That's why the numbers are there.

**Mr. Klees:** Could you articulate for us, then, what percentage, or in real figures—I imagine that if you don't have it, the deputy does—how much of that ministry administration would be allocated to those three minis-

tries that you mentioned: tourism, francophone affairs and culture?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Maybe I'll let the deputy answer that.

**Ms. Joan Andrew:** I'm Joan Andrew, the deputy minister. The total divisional budget for ministry administration is about \$14.3 million, and the total budgets for the ministries it serves is about \$712 million. So the administration represents approximately 2% of the total budgets of the ministries it serves.

**The Chair:** Excuse me, Deputy. I'm told by electronic Hansard that they're not quite picking you up. If you could speak either a little more directly or a little louder, it would be helpful. Thank you very much.

**Ms. Andrew:** The ministry administration is located in our ministry and reflected in our ministry estimates, but it serves the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Tourism, and, on a temporary basis, the Ministry of Health Promotion because of the recreation and sport programs moved there, and the Office of Francophone Affairs. So the total budgets of the ministries that it supports is about \$712 million, \$713 million, and its budget is about \$14.3 million. So the overall administration is about 2% of the total budget of the ministries it supports, but it's located in our estimates.

**0940**

**Mr. Klees:** So, to clarify—I'm trying to understand this. I don't know how you get to the 2%. Are you saying that of the total administrative budget, about 2% is allocated for these other ministries that the minister referred to?

**Ms. Andrew:** No. Sorry, I guess I haven't explained it well.

The total ministry budgets, of all the ministries that that unit supports, is about \$713 million, and its budget is about \$14 million. What I was trying to say was that the total administrative budget, measured across the budgets of the ministries it supports, is about 2% of their total budget.

**Mr. Klees:** And what percentage of the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration would then be allocated for administration, if you segregate that?

**Ms. Andrew:** The costs haven't been segregated. I can see if we can segregate those costs and get back to you. But, if I can say it this way, we have an integrated legal services department; we have an integrated IT department. I don't think we've done the cost accounting to attribute them across the piece. People are moved as projects come up.

**Mr. Klees:** I would think that the minister himself would probably be interested in getting that information. It was always a frustration for me, trying to get those numbers. When you start to lump a number of ministries together, it's very easy to lose focus in terms of what my ministry or the minister's ministry is actually spending on administration.

I think one of the first questions that the minister, that the government, should have is, how effective are we in terms of the total dollars that are being allocated to our



ministry, and how much of it is actually going to the front-line services that that division of the ministry is trying to achieve? I would make that request to have those numbers broken out so that we can get a better picture of exactly what that ratio is.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Mr. Klees, if I could elaborate, because those are the questions I asked when I looked at the ministry numbers: In essence, the attempt is to get greater efficiencies in coordination. Rather than replicating HR and IT support in every ministry, there's been a consolidation to in essence use our tax dollars better. That's something that I think was carried over from the last government, where it was thought to be more effective to combine them under one roof and provide these services to four different ministries. There's a saving in the long run in doing that. That's essentially the rationale behind it.

**Mr. Klees:** I've heard that explanation myself, Minister, and my concern is that if that is the objective, then we should also be able to identify that that in fact is what's happening. All too often, under the guise of structure to achieve efficiency, sometimes we lose it. I want to be sure that that is not happening here and that you as minister have a full understanding that when you're asked the question in your own ministry, "What is the ratio of administration to actual services delivered?" you have a ready answer for it. I think your staff should be able to deliver that to you. I'd like to move on.

You stated that your ministry mandate states that your ministry has the lead responsibility for accessibility. I understand that there's a shift to community and social services in terms of responsibility for the Ontarians with Disabilities Act. However, there is an allocation in your budget of \$3 million, if I read this correctly, for funding to support the ODA. Is that correct?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** I think that those issues relating to support for the accessibility file are going to be answered by Minister Papatello.

**The Chair:** If I might, there are staff here from the secretariats if you have questions. I see the senior civil servant responsible for the act is present with us.

**Mr. Klees:** I do have a certain flow to my questions. If we could just get that issue dealt with, I would appreciate that, if there's someone here who can just confirm that in this budget there is \$3 million allocated in support of ODA.

**Ms. Andrew:** Katherine Hewson can come. Just as an explanation, the budget for the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act is in our estimates, but the responsibility for the programs was transferred in the June government reorganization to the Ministry of Community and Social Services. So Minister Papatello has responsibility for it, and the estimates for next year will reflect the movement of that. But with the transfers happening after the estimates were established, the budget does remain with us for this year.

**Mr. Klees:** OK, and you'll confirm that. I will certainly follow this up with Minister Papatello this afternoon, but can you, just in broad terms, tell me what that

\$3 million is going to support, and are there other line items in community and social services, then, in support of the same program?

**Ms. Katherine Hewson:** I'm Katherine Hewson. I'm acting assistant deputy minister in the citizenship and immigration division of the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration. I'm actually not responsible for the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, as a result of the transfer to the Ministry of Community and Social Services, so I can really only say a little bit about the \$3 million. I think that perhaps your question would be better dealt with by Minister Papatello and her staff later on today.

The \$3 million is an increment to the existing budget of the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration. It is for services that would be needed to support the implementation of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. I think that Minister Papatello and her staff would probably be in a better position to tell you how they intend to use that money.

**Mr. Klees:** Very good. I'll follow that up this afternoon, then.

Back, then, Minister, to matters that are directly under your responsibility: I want to just follow up on this agreement that I believe you indicated in your statement this morning is imminent. Your predecessor had signed a letter of intent. There are some financial commitments that have been made by the federal government as a result of meetings with the Premier. Specifically, can you give us an idea of just what "imminent" means to you in terms of having that celebratory signing of this agreement? How imminent is it, really?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** As you know, Mr. Klees, the Premier was very aggressive in his campaign to get fairness for Ontario in putting front and centre the need for the federal government to invest more in our newcomers and in their settlement services. That's why, over and over again, he talked about the fact that a newcomer who came to Ontario was only getting \$819 invested in their settlement and immigration services, yet if a newcomer went to Quebec, the federal government invested \$3,800. The Premier was emphatic in saying that that was not fair. I'm happy to say that I think Prime Minister Martin got the message, and back in May, there was a memorandum agreed to where that disparity would be dealt with and funding for Ontario newcomers would be quadrupled as a result of this memorandum being signed.

Over the last number of months, federal officials in various ministries, along with my ministry and others—Minister Bountrogianni in intergovernmental affairs, the Premier's office—have been working with due diligence and deliberate focus. All I can say at this point is that I am very optimistic and positive. We are very close, to the point where, as I said in my comments, I hope to be the first Minister of Citizenship and Immigration of Ontario to sign an agreement between the province and the federal government. I can't give you the exact date, but again, I am very optimistic that it's very close.

0950

**Mr. Klees:** Minister, you've taken about five minutes to tell me that you can't be any more specific, and I appreciate that. I was hoping you might be.

Minister Volpe has indicated on a number of occasions that he has a plan for increasing immigration by 100,000 a year up to 2010. Have you met with Minister Volpe on this issue?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Yes, I have. I have met with the minister one-on-one. We've also had interprovincial conferences that dealt with this issue. Mr Volpe, I think, recognizes that Ontario needs this enhanced investment for newcomers to succeed. I think we both agree that it will benefit the same constituents we serve locally and provincially if this agreement comes to be. Again, he is very positive, and I'm looking forward to signing the agreement with Mr. Volpe.

**Mr. Klees:** Thank you, Minister. So you support the increase in immigration by 100,000 per year, according to the Volpe plan, yes? I really would prefer to just get kind of concise answers as we move forward. I have a number of questions.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** OK, but sometimes the answer requires a few more words than—

**Mr. Klees:** Actually, this is quite simple: yes or no?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Again, the report about the increased allocation of immigrants allowed into Canada is a report—my understanding of it is that it has not gone to cabinet; it hasn't been decided upon.

As you know, we as a province are very positive about new immigrants coming, and we need them. But as a province, we're also very realistic. We're saying that we require investment in those newcomers and we need that kind of investment to come with the newcomers, and that's something we've been very emphatic about in our negotiations. That's why we pressed for the quadrupling of investment in Ontario newcomers.

**Mr. Klees:** I'm going to assume, Minister, that you agree with the 100,000-per-year increase and also that Ontario, which typically gets 50% of immigrants coming to Canada, will be absorbing about 50,000 more per year.

As you look at your budget in terms of the planning you're doing, you're basically almost flatlined from last year's budget in your ministry. Do you feel that you have sufficient resources within your ministry to do all the things you spoke about in your opening statement? These are huge undertakings in terms of settlement, in terms of ensuring that people are integrated as they come here. Very briefly, do you feel satisfied with your budget at the amount that's been allocated to you?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** I am very excited about the fact that the federal government is going to quadruple—let me say that again: four times the funding for newcomer settlement will be invested and spent in Ontario. The newcomer settlement programs will be enriched to historic levels as a result of this agreement, whereas now, as I said, it's \$819. We got the federal government to commit—and they have committed—to over \$3,400. With that kind of investment, we are going to make break-

throughs in immigrant settlement and English-language training like we've never had before. So I am very bullish and positive, because we are finally getting the federal government to be full partners in investing in these programs. My ministry, and the agencies we support, will be enhanced by this agreement, again, in historical terms.

**Mr. Klees:** Consistent, Minister, with your objective in your ministry, and that is to ensure that immigrants are fully integrated and that they have the settlement support they need and your commitment to ensuring that foreign-trained professionals—I assume that that is a large part of your mandate as Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Can you tell me—you must be familiar with IMG-Ontario.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Yes.

**Mr. Klees:** Can you tell me how IMG-Ontario is supporting your initiative as minister?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** International Medical Graduates is one of many organizations that my ministry and other ministries of this government work with in terms of trying to break down barriers to our professions. I would like to say that, in terms of the estimates, access to professions and trades is actually under the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. I have been given this transference of mandate, and that will be in next year's estimates. So technically, the monies allocated for dealing with access to professions and trades, under estimates, is under TCU.

I would say that, in general, speaking about my ministry's efforts to encourage and remove barriers, that is going to be one of my top priorities. This is why the Premier has put this new mandated focus on my ministry, because he said that we have to make this a very high priority of one ministry that will have a seamless and integrated approach to helping break down barriers, to take the lead role in this and to champion the cause of foreign-trained professionals right across the board, because we need them to serve as doctors, engineers, nurses, midwives. That's the kind of work I will be doing. It's something we need, not only for our economy but also for the service provisions that foreign-trained professionals can offer communities across Ontario.

**Mr. Klees:** Thank you, Minister. Chair, if I could just have your help, I know the minister is anxious to expound on these answers far beyond my question. I will never get through my questions if I don't get some help from the minister. If you could help me with that, I would appreciate it. I don't mean any disrespect; I just do have some issues I want to get to.

With regard to foreign-trained professionals, Minister, it is now established that you have the responsibility for these issues. I look forward to working with you, because it is a serious problem. There are announcements that are being made, there are claims that are being made by the government in terms of the success of these programs, but we continue to see people falling through the cracks. I hope that somewhere in your mandate and somewhere in your funding you're going to have the opportunity to address them.

I am going to read you some information that leads to my next question. It's an e-mail from a constituent, who says, "We live in Richmond Hill in your riding. My wife had appeared for selection of foreign trained doctors in 2004-05. ... I am providing you the details regarding the issues relating to foreign trained doctors. These are included in the attachment." I have a file here.

He goes on to say that the government claims that it more than doubled the capacity for foreign-trained doctors. He states, "This is a false claim. They have never selected 200 foreign trained doctors. The actual numbers of foreign trained doctors selected are way short of 200."

Then he goes on to make some statements that I want you to have for your benefit. He makes the following statement:

"We ... appreciate that it is the prerogative of program directors to apply ... qualitative factors ....

"However what we seek is more transparent feedback about our scores in these qualitative factors and reasons for selection/non-selection."

#### 1000

Minister, this is where there is often a difference between the intent of a policy and what actually happens. This is only one example of a constituent who has come to me saying, "I'm going through this process. The government is setting up these programs for assessment and qualification. However, the program is faulty. We're not being given the opportunity to actually embrace the program that the government is putting forward. If I fail the program, if I'm not selected, please at least give us feedback in terms of why, so that we can make the appropriate corrections, we can focus on remedial study to get us up to speed in those areas." He makes the following points:

"What candidates will do with this feedback."

"(1) They will determine their areas of weakness in this attempt;

"(2) They will determine which of those areas are correctible;

"(3) They will apply themselves and improve in those areas so that they do not carry over the same mistakes in their next attempt;

"(4) Or they would determine that these qualitative factors are not correctible and no amount of effort would correct these factors," which means, "I don't want to waste my time."

The reality is that it costs these immigrants, these foreign-trained professionals, significant dollars to even get into the assessment program. I'm assuming, Minister, that you're aware of these problems. Can you commit that this is something that you, as minister, with your new mandate, your new responsibilities to address these issues, will look at seriously and undertake a review of this program?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** If I could answer the multiple questions that were posed there, I just want to say, first of all, that the responsibilities in some of these areas are also in the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, where they have invested \$26 million in helping foreign-trained

doctors to access residency positions. I know that the residency positions have been increased up to 200 in Ontario, and you can ask that of that ministry.

Our role here is essentially to find ways of getting a transparent process of registration, application, into professions. That is why we've already established 35 bridge training programs to help that. We've also commissioned a renowned judge, Judge George Thomson—I'm sure you're familiar with him—a renowned former deputy minister, an Ontario court judge, to look at that very thing about due process, transparency, accountability and objectivity in that process, because you're not only dealing with the College of Physicians and Surgeons; you're dealing with the professional engineers and the teaching profession. He has put together a report that will be coming forward fairly soon with some very concrete recommendations on how to deal with a fair process and also what an applicant does if he or she feels they have not been dealt with fairly. I'm looking forward to sharing that report, because it is a very in-depth look at those issues, which are very complex.

I would say that we also acknowledge the fact that Ontario receives 125,000 newcomers every year. We are telling the federal government that it's very important that Canada recognizes that we have to work closely together to ensure that there isn't frustration by professionally trained individuals and that there's more work done at the source level, the source country. That's why, later this month, we're going to be opening up a portal whereby citizens all over the world who are thinking of coming to Ontario, or potential immigrants, are going to find out what the requirements are, what the job markets are at Ontario immigration, I think it is. That's the type of thing we have to do a better job of, federally and provincially, so that we have more upfront information and more due process all the way through the system. That's what we were working on.

**Mr. Klees:** Minister Volpe recently stated that the federal government, through its plan, will attempt to ensure that immigrants settle in communities outside of gateway cities such as Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal. Do you support that objective?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** In fact, one of the things that we're going to be doing with our new gateway portal is profiling various communities across Ontario that we feel are exceptional places to live and work in. Whether it's Kitchener-Waterloo or the Ottawa area or Sudbury, they're going to be partners in profiling their communities. I would say again that in Ontario we support newcomers moving to all communities across Ontario. I was in Kitchener-Waterloo—the enormous benefit newcomers have made to that growing economy. So we certainly support any initiative that encourages newcomers to go to the wonderful small and large rural communities in this great province, and that's part of our goal too.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Minister. I'd like to now recognize Mr. Marchese.

**Mr. Marchese:** Minister, I already congratulated you on your new position, but I don't mind doing that again. I want to make two observations, and if you have a comment, that's OK with me. If you don't, I'll move on to the questions.

I want to congratulate you on your restraint today, because given the record of the previous Conservative government on the issue of foreign trades and professions, you were very respectful, I thought, unlike Mr. Bentley yesterday, who on every occasion took every opportunity to attack all the governments from past to previous past and anything else he could make reference to; and he did that on a regular basis, question after question. Interesting restraint on your part—I thought I would mention that.

The other observation is that when someone becomes a minister and they happen to be Italian or black or Chinese, we tend to say, "He came from Calabria or Bari," or if he's from Portugal, "He came from the Azores." If he's from Asia, he came from so and so. They focus on the immigrant component of his or her background. I also notice at the same time that if someone comes from Ireland or Scotland or England, there's very little mention of the fact that his or her ancestors came from Ireland or Scotland or England; it's just taken as a given. It's amazing, and I find it curious that we do that, rather than saying, "My colleague is the new Minister of Citizenship."

Does it make you more suitable to be a Minister of Citizenship because you're of Italian background or an immigrant? I don't get it. If you were an Anglo in that position, they wouldn't say that, and I would say they probably have the same ability as anybody else. It's an observation I make. It sort of irritates me a little bit. Do you find that experience as well? Do you have a comment?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** First of all, I want to say about previous governments—

**Mr. Marchese:** You don't have to.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Just quickly. All I just want to say is that I think we've reached a new paradigm here as Ontarians in realizing that we as a province have to really take the challenge of immigration much more seriously, much more focused, because we have so much at stake in helping our newcomers. That's what I think the Premier is trying to do, and that's what I hope I can do. I don't want to castigate or blame past governments, because I think we've all come to a new point here, as I say. Hopefully, we're finally moving in the right direction.

On the second comment, the only thing that I can comment on is that it's not so much an irritant. I think, if someone comes from an immigrant background—like you, myself—naturally people say, "At least they may have a sense of what the experience is like, having walked in their shoes a bit." So maybe that's part of the commentary that takes place, and I don't find that to be irritating. I find that essentially to be almost a positive thing, because it's pretty hard sometimes, as much as we may be academically or technically knowledgeable in an

area, the fact that we may have gone through the immigrant experience—I think it helps me in undertaking my duties.

**Mr. Marchese:** I understand. I'm going to get into some questions. I think the question on everyone's mind is the settlement and immigration service sector and what is happening with the federal-provincial immigration agreement. You commented on that, and I have some follow-up in that regard.

Just to give you some background, yesterday I asked Minister Bentley a number of questions connected, first of all, to the \$600-million agreement having to do with monies that would come to the provincial government to deal with issues of post-secondary education. There were some conditions that the agreement had, and they were that money would be used to reduce tuition fees and for training and so on. I was puzzled by the fact that the minister and your Premier have not been attacking the federal government to get that money right away. There could be an election soon. The money isn't flowing. You guys are arguing that there's a \$23-billion gap, and the Premier has not said a word on that agreement between two parties for which the money should be flowing, and flowing quickly. Nothing has happened. That's one.

#### 1010

The other one is the labour market development agreement. At the May 7 meeting between Premier McGuinty and Prime Minister Paul Martin, there was an agreement to reach a deal within 30 working days, and 150 days later, nothing has happened. We don't know what the status of those negotiations is; he couldn't say. He kept referring to this active table as opposed to a passive table—that it's active and it's on the table, and he's "working aggressively toward"—you know, that kind of stuff.

Then I made reference to a quote from Dalton McGuinty in relation to the labour market development agreement, where McGuinty says, "The Harris-Eves government was too busy fighting with the federal government to partner with them on a skills strategy for Ontario." We still don't have an agreement with a new Premier who's a Liberal and is presumably much more friendly with the federal government, and nothing is happening. Then we come to this issue of the federal-provincial integration agreement, and I see nothing happening. What do you think is going on, Mike?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** There isn't a day that goes by when I haven't received some update or some question or comment about a meeting that either Minister Bountrogianni or the Premier's office has had, so this is aggressively being pursued. I guess when you're trying to get a landmark change of this nature to take place—it is quite a departure. We're looking at changing 100 years of history, plus there was a change in ministries and Minister Stronach came to the fore.

On the immigration agreement, which I deal with as a minister, I am literally waiting by the phone day by day for that to be completed. You'll be one of the first people I will call—I'm serious about that—to let you know. I am

anxious. You're so right, and the Premier is as anxious as you are. But the thing is moving along in the right direction.

**Mr. Marchese:** I appreciate that. Do you think McGuinty was wrong to have said that the problem of not getting an agreement was that the previous Harris-Eves government was just fighting the federal government? Was that the problem, do you think?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** I think the previous Harris-Eves government had a totally different approach to immigration and signing agreements with the feds. Our Premier said we have to work together, and that is happening.

**Mr. Marchese:** That's not working out, and that's my problem.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** It is working in that direction. It's happening.

**Mr. Marchese:** I understand that you agree with me because without this agreement, the province forfeits millions of dollars a year in federal funding. You talked about the fact that once the agreement is had, we will have quadrupled the amount of dollars. This money should be going to help newcomers find employment, get language training, move into an apartment and upgrade their qualifications, if necessary. Ontario is the only province with no immigration agreement, and it receives substantially less than everybody else. I understand that you understand we're the only ones without an agreement. How could it have been easy for the federal government to have come to agreements with everyone else, but they're finding it difficult with the previous government and with your government, friendly as they are to each other—they're cousins literally. We can't seem to get it going. Something is wrong and I don't quite understand what that is.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Again, the good news is that it is going to happen for the first time, and that's been acknowledged by Minister Volpe and Prime Minister Martin. So that is going to happen. The history of it is the history of Confederation etc., and I don't think we want to go into that.

I think we have really gotten the attention of the federal government. The Premier, with his efforts, has gotten the attention of the public. We've got the public onside. The newcomer settlement community workers I've talked to are finally seeing some hope in this agreement being signed. So there is a shift that is taking place, and I think it's a positive one. I think we're very much almost there.

**Mr. Marchese:** The problem, Minister, again—and I'm badgering you a little bit. You're giving me the same answer, as I'm giving you the same question; I understand that. I'm just pressing you with different points as a way of making the point.

On May 7, 2004, Mesdames Sgro and Bountrogianni signed a letter of intent, promising an immigration agreement within 12 months. We're still waiting. A year after that, on May 7, 2005, Premier Dalton McGuinty and Prime Minister Paul Martin signed a memorandum that said Ontario's funding per immigrant would rise to

\$3,400. Ontario hasn't received a cent. I get tired of these signings of memoranda and agreements. Don't you get sick of it? I get sick of it. What's the point of signing something and saying something if nothing happens?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** The one key thing that I think you might be happy to hear is that we are continually interjecting the point that this agreement has to be done right. For instance, in the whole area of the number of newcomers who come to Ontario, the fact is that we get almost 57%. Shifts in federal immigration policies affect Ontario deeply, and Ontario can't be treated the same way as Manitoba and its few number of newcomers. That is the type of negotiation, the type of agreement we want in writing. We want that protection there in an ironclad way so we don't get caught where we've signed an agreement because the money seems to be large in a gross number, but then it doesn't take into account the specific challenges we have in Ontario.

For instance, you're well aware of the specific challenges we have now with English as a second language. We're getting so many newcomers from China, for instance, so English-as-a-second-language teachers have to be much more qualified and tuned in to the challenges of a non-Latin alphabet and that type of thing. The fact is that many of our newcomers are highly trained: 70% of them have some kind of post-secondary education or training.

Signing an agreement just for the sake of getting a lump sum of money would be easier to do, but we've said that we want the agreement to have those protections and specific issues addressed.

**Mr. Marchese:** No disagreement. By the way, I agree with you, as a former teacher and trustee with the Toronto school board. We have been hammering the federal government for the last 20 years that I have been in politics, where the federal government has abdicated its responsibilities to immigrants, the majority of whom come to Ontario. It's disgraceful. It's disgraceful for any government at the federal level, both Liberal and Tory, that has not acted on this.

That means the province is put in the position to have to find money to provide funding that appropriately belongs to the federal government. For 20 years, in spite of all the exhortations that all of us have made, they don't listen—it's amazing—and it continues. My fear is that unless you can pinpoint a date soon, we are not going to get an agreement before this election, and after the election, we don't know what's going to happen. So while I appreciate that you're trying to get an agreement that's comprehensive, my fear is—if you've got a better deal coming, I would take it before something happens, if that's the issue. But I'm not sure that's the issue, by the way. I am urging you to urge them to urge McGuinty to call them and say, "Fix a date soon," because if it doesn't happen, it won't happen. Do you share my fear?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** I share your fear, but I hope I can share my optimism with you too. I am less fearful today than I was yesterday.

**Mr. Marchese:** I understand you're optimistic and that you need to be and need to communicate that. I was reading to you a number of quotes, including the memorandum that was signed as recently as May 7, 2005. It's a memorandum; it's purported to mean something. They mean nothing. So good luck with your optimism. In the meantime, we will hammer you as being closely associated with the federal Liberals and, in spite of that affinity you have for each other, that we have no deal. Maybe we need a New Democratic government, I don't know. Even Frank disagrees with that.

1020

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** We don't have to go to extremes. We're very, very close.

**Mr. Marchese:** I think it would be a good threat if we said to the public, "We're about to elect a New Democratic government." Trust me: Martin would sign a deal right away, I can tell you.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Again, that's a strategy that I won't—

**Mr. Marchese:** Pursue.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** —pursue myself. I've got enough, let's say—

**Mr. Marchese:** Optimism on your plate.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** It's optimism that is really embedded in concrete progress that is very positive, as far as I'm concerned.

**Mr. Marchese:** I understand. I don't see it, but I understand that you feel that.

In August 2005, you announced that Queen's Park was investing \$4.1 million in immigrant settlement services. You know that Madame Bountrogianni had made exactly the same announcement a year before that, right?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Yes. What happened is that there was an allocation of a lump sum of money, \$4.1 million, for newcomer settlement services, and then the applications came in by individual organizations for specific projects, for CultureLink, COSTI and all these partners we have, the Kitchener-Waterloo Multicultural Centre. The process is that the staff go through all the applications meeting the criteria; most of the criteria are based on that you have to have two years' experience of delivering settlement services. What I announced is what is traditionally announced: In August, the specific agencies are given notification that they have a specific amount of money for their services, and that's what I did in August. I did it at COSTI, and we had about 50 of the recipients there, organizations from all over. They said, "We realize that we still need a great deal more, but at least the provincial government has programs that are much more flexible than the federal government's and really help us deal with our client base." It was a very positive meeting I had with the community-based organizations that receive this funding from the provincial government.

**Mr. Marchese:** Sure. I can imagine. In this sector, any extra cent they get they're going to love and accept; they're not going to reject it. You're quite right. My point was that, as far as I can tell, this \$4 million is not new

money. It's not enhanced money as a result of your coming into this ministry this year. It's old money. That's all I'm saying.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Basically, it's the same amount that was given last year. The good news is that with the federal-provincial agreement, monies will now begin to flow from the federal government into these community-based organizations who need this money desperately.

**Mr. Marchese:** I agree. But you're making it appear like this is an extra \$4 million from last year. It's the same money.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** No, no. I said it was the same. It's a continuation. It's another \$4 million for this year; there was \$4 million last year. We are continuing our commitment of dollars. They make application every year for the money.

**Mr. Marchese:** Let's be clear, because I just said something and you said no, and then you appeared to be saying yes. Last year Bountrogianni announced \$4 million. That was last year.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** No, in the budget there was an allocation of \$4.1 million for newcomer settlement services. Once she made that announcement, then the application process starts by the settlement services to get part of that \$4.1 million, depending on their needs. I announced, "Here's who got the money."

**Mr. Marchese:** OK. It's confusing, because it appears as if it's an extra \$4 million.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** No, I announced which organizations received—

**Mr. Marchese:** Got the money that was announced last year. All right.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** It was the global amount. I announced who were the successful applicants.

**Mr. Marchese:** You understand the announcement makes it appear as if it's new money. That's why I raised the question.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** No. It was quite clear in the announcement, and I think the settlement agencies that were there understood that.

**Mr. Marchese:** I understand what you're saying. The reason I'm asking is, because the way it was communicated, it appeared as if it was new money, but you've explained that it isn't, so we're clear on that.

The other question is with respect to the newcomer services program. Funding has been flatlined, as mentioned by the Conservative critic, for many years, despite the fact that the number of newcomers to Ontario is steadily increasing. Can you or the deputy tell me, how long have we had a flat-lining of citizenship monies?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** I know I asked the same question you did. Essentially, I think this program was started in 1997. The amount of monies allocated for the NSP, as we call it, has always been in this range of \$4 million. That's been the general range. That's my recollection.

**Ms. Andrew:** There was a small increase last year from \$3.9 million to \$4.1 million, so there has been a small increase recently.

**Mr. Marchese:** Everything comes in small amounts in your ministry, is that correct?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** It's a small ministry.

**Mr. Marchese:** My view is that this newcomer service program is incredibly important to immigrants, without having to talk about the fact that the Conservatives eliminated the Welcome Houses, which were so critical to settlement services for so many. I really do believe that we need to give more support to the newcomers, and the level of money you get from the government, let's say the Premier in this case, is very little. I don't know what your intentions are in terms of how you might raise this issue publicly or with the Premier to see how we can increase that.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** The linkage is with the federal-provincial agreement on immigration. That is why we've been telling everyone that the money we're asking for, and going to get, as a province is not going to go into our treasury as the quadrupling occurs of the investment in newcomer services. It will flow directly to the community-based agencies, like the 79 we fund. So when we talk about the extra \$300 million next year, that money will go directly to them.

**Mr. Marchese:** So in other words, you don't get it directly and then send it to them; they get it directly?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Yes.

**Mr. Marchese:** Isn't that interesting.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** That's part of the agreement. But it's done in consultation with us, our priorities and the needs in Ontario, regionally or in specific cases when we get an influx of certain newcomers. We will collaborate with the federal government on what our needs and priorities are in Ontario, so we do it together. But we don't want to reinvent the organizations, because they're already on the ground. As you've said, they're excellent.

**Mr. Marchese:** I don't mind that, because I think it's an interesting process. But normally the provinces fight like mad to get the money so that they can decide on what the priorities are in the province rather than having the government, with your agreement, decide to send the money directly. Is that not an unusual kind of step?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** I think the settlement organizations, basically, say that they need the resources, and whether it's us that cuts the cheque or the federal government, they badly need the resources. So we as a government feel that we want to flow that money through as quickly as possible, and that's what we've told the federal government. We want the money invested in Ontario programs, spent in Ontario, and that's our ultimate objective.

**Mr. Marchese:** No problem. Talking about the settlement sector and their needs, as I understand it, there used to be an annual Geneva Park conference in Orillia that would bring together the settlement sector for professional development. You have funded that Geneva conference on a regular basis, is that not correct, Deputy or Minister?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Well, I'm aware of the fact that the Geneva conference was held over the years. I'm not sure at this point in time whether we are funding it, but I can

say to you that that's the type of thing we will be looking at to enhance and invest in, because those are invaluable parts of building the training, the expertise and the sharing of resources. So we have to look at those types of reinvestments and enhancements.

**Mr. Marchese:** I agree with you. I have learned that the money for this year has been withdrawn, so there is no conference going on. The federal government stopped funding professional development, and maybe your money is linked to them or is contingent on this thing going on, but I am amazed that the federal government cut its funding support and that your ministry did the same. Given the level of need that you and I recognize, how could we let that happen?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** I will get you specific information on the Geneva conference itself. I don't think we've funded it in three or four years, but I will get you specific information on that later today. The main thing I would say is that that's the type of investment we have to start to make again. That's why, as the federal money starts to flow into Ontario settlement services, that's the type of program we have to enhance. Whether it's OCASI or whether it's the Geneva conference, they need that kind of support from our ministry and from the federal government. We hope to play an aggressive role in getting those types of programs reinstated.

1030

**Mr. Marchese:** That is my hope. I hope that the money that was taken away by the feds is going to come back. I hope that your role is reintroduced. I hope that if you're relying on the federal government, you will lobby the federal government publicly to get this money.

You know that a lot of these workers working in this field make anywhere from \$33,000 to \$35,000. These people work full-time, like so many other civil servants, but that kind of wage is a low-income wage for a very important service they provide to, often in cases, very vulnerable individuals coming from other countries. Given the fact that this is a professional development day activity, which is their only opportunity to come together and learn new things from each other or whomever else they bring toward that professional development, I'm a bit puzzled and upset that this thing is not going on.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** I couldn't agree with you more. As I've gone around the province already, I've been so impressed with the on-the-ground professionals. I was in a multicultural centre in St. Catharines. The intake worker was a senior bureaucrat with the National Bank of Egypt. The other intake worker was a Ph.D. who had just immigrated from China. We have such an abundance of qualified, dedicated people, as you said, working for very low wages, doing extraordinary work, contributing—I mean they're the ones who are allowing success.

**Mr. Marchese:** We agree.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** So I'm saying that we also feel that that's why this is starting to turn, that we have to start to reinvest, not only in the actual service delivery but in the people who deliver those services.

**Mr. Marchese:** We're agreeing. It would be my hope that you would look at this conference. I don't know when—I should have gotten the date in terms of when it should have happened—

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** I will get back to you with the—

**Mr. Marchese:** You should look into that, and I would appreciate you getting back to me in terms of the settlement sector having a better sense of your optimism and your comments, and hopefully that will be reflected in the money that should flow to them.

The other big problem for me which has taken place in the last five, seven years—possibly longer; I don't remember—is that many of the settlement sector service agencies used to get core funding from the provincial government and federal government. In the last seven years or so, they are now surviving on a year-to-year basis based on applying for project funding.

In my view, it's a disgraceful move by federal and provincial governments, because it forces these organizations, as you well know them, to have to fill out applications. Some of them have the staff to do it because they're big agencies. In some cases, they have a full-time staff person who knows how to fill out the forms and has the language to speak to Tories, to speak to Liberals, to speak to NDPers, whomever is in government; they know how to do it well.

Most of these agencies delivering this service have no understanding of the politics of the changing governments. They don't even know how to fill out the forms, and they don't have the staff time. Having moved from core funding to project funding, in my view, is hurtful. What can you tell me about what the government is doing with respect to this?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Again, I think this whole area of providing settlement services and the funding over the years has not been invested in as it should be. As I say, I think there's a real shift taking place, both federally and provincially, to see that that has to change for us to be successful as a province. So that's fine; that's the positive.

We generally fund on hours per service provided. That's our approach provincially, the way we've been funding the settlement services in Ontario. So it's based on per hour of service provided.

**Mr. Marchese:** I understand the federal government is looking at changing this process; they're moving from project funding or one-year funding to three-year funding. I understand United Way is also looking into that.

I also thought the provincial government was doing the same, but you're saying that's not the case; you simply provide money on the basis of whatever service they provide, not what they apply for on a project basis. Is that my understanding?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** This is one of the specifics in the agreement that we're working on with the federal government, that type of coordinated—in other words, we don't want them to have core funding, and then we wouldn't. So we are saying for the first time—and

they're agreeing—that we have to work together on this file, whether it's the duplication of English-as-a-second-language provisions that are taking place, the type of funding mechanisms—that's the kind of detail we're working out.

**Mr. Marchese:** So your staff is at the table on a regular basis with respect to working out this agreement? That's what this is all about?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** They're involved. In fact, Katherine Hewson and Joan Andrew have been intimately involved in that type of detail.

**Mr. Marchese:** So, Deputy, we're really, really, really close, then? Is that what you're saying?

**Ms. Andrew:** We're very, very, very, very close.

**Mr. Marchese:** We have a memorandum of understanding, you understand.

**Ms. Andrew:** But we are focusing on how to better integrate and coordinate services for the clients. So the level of detail that we're working on, those kinds of things, is a bit more detailed focus than just intent.

**Mr. Marchese:** Just as another follow-up, I understand there are a lot of young people coming into the country without parents, and in the last 10 years we have been seeing more and more unaccompanied young people aged 16, 17, 18 and 19, possibly; I don't know their ages. But I'm told there are a lot of young people coming and we give them very, very little support, as I understand it, from talking to a number of people in an agency or two.

Are your staff people familiar with this, given that you're new in your portfolio, Minister, or is your deputy familiar with this in terms of what they know and what they're doing and, if they're not doing much, whether they're lobbying the federal government to do something?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Go ahead, Deputy.

**Ms. Andrew:** I'm actually newer than the minister in this portfolio.

Most of the responsibility for that eventually rests with the Ministry of Community and Social Services, so we don't have primary responsibility for that. I could ask them what they're doing and report back to the committee if you wish.

**Mr. Marchese:** You are now acquiring various things in your ministry that deal with newcomers, and that is an interesting answer you are giving me, given that you're acquiring everything that has to do with immigration and immigrants, and citizenship and blah, blah. And on this particular issue, the other ministry is dealing with this?

**Ms. Andrew:** Well, I think, because they have responsibility for some of the social issues—protection of income support, those kinds of things—they have lead responsibility. As the minister said, we're in the process of rebuilding the ministry and, as we move forward on the immigration agreement, this may become part of it.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. We now come to a point in our discussions, Minister, where, if you feel the need to respond to any of the statements made by the official opposition or the third party, you may—up to 30



minutes, if you choose—and once you're completed, we can begin the regular rotation of questions.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Mr. Chairman, I'll be fairly short. I won't take up the 30 minutes. I just wanted to re-emphasize and maybe respond to some of the questions raised. The main point is that the Premier has made the settlement and the success of newcomers a priority of our government. In this ministry, we are going to be advocating for our newcomers, because it's quite evident that Ontario's success is based on the success of our newcomers.

If you look at the economy of Ontario, great contributions have been made, whether it's the more notable immigrants like Frank Stronach—coming here with essentially a suitcase and a few dollars in his pocket—or Iggy Kaneff or John Bitove, or the nameless shopkeepers and people who open up garages and people who are delivering newspapers. If you look at the amazing growth in Markham, the activity that's happening in York region, the growth in Brampton and Kitchener-Waterloo, all over this province there is witness to the amazing contributions newcomers have made and are making.

**1040**

We in this ministry will try to do the best we can to get them to reach their potential. That's why we and the Premier have been so aggressive in getting that agreement with the federal government. For too long, there hasn't been the fair investment by the federal government in these programs that our newcomers need. We know we can give them that helping hand at the beginning, whether it be with language, with skills training, with bridge training, which we are doing.

I just want to mention our bridge training program. I had the good fortune that we had our third grandchild two weeks ago; my daughter had a daughter. Sometimes you sort of blend the academic side of work with the reality of your family. My daughter was very fortunate to have a midwife help in the delivery; it's the second child she's had with a midwife. I was talking to the midwife about the labour market for midwives in Ontario, and I said, "Are you aware of our bridge training program for midwives that exists in Ontario?" She said, "I sure am." We aggressively try to get this partnership going where-by midwives, who have been immigrating to Canada from all over the world, want to set up practice in Ontario and help Ontario women who choose to have children with professional midwives, so we have this bridge training program.

The bridge training program basically links the expertise and academic background they've had in their country of origin with Ontario practices. Hundreds of midwives have been coming through the program, and after a year's sort of internship, of blending the practices back in their country of origin with Ontario ones, we have successfully integrated midwives into Ontario, because there is a shortage of midwives. It's a great success story, but without that bridge training, that upfront investment that we as the government did, or that we as a government have to do, we wouldn't be able to have

success stories of highly qualified new Canadians who come to Ontario and want to deliver a very important service; that is, midwifery.

That is the type of approach we're taking: to invest in those link programs, invest in that bridge training program, so that whether it be nurses, whether it be teachers, whether it be biotechnicians, we give them that help in the early stages so they can reach their potential and contribute to Ontario's society and economy. That's the overall mandate of my ministry.

I know the member from Trinity-Spadina is very concerned about when the agreement is going to be signed. Really, no one is more anxious than I am or the Premier is, but I would again categorically say that we are extremely close to finally making that breakthrough where the federal government will invest money in those community-based programs that already exist in every community across Ontario. We've got amazing delivery of services in every community. They've been doing it on a shoestring over the last number of years. We've tried our best, as a province, to do that. But without the federal government coming to the table and investing that money in newcomer settlement programs and removing these barriers, we won't be able to make those major breakthroughs. That's why I think we now are going to make that major paradigm shift where they will get the resources, the investments will take place and success will come.

Ontario has no choice but to do this. As I mentioned earlier, Alberta is undertaking an aggressive immigration marketing policy as we speak because they have a shortage of skilled labourers. They have the same challenge we have: flat birthrate, aging workforce. So we have to invest in this integration and we have to compete with the rest of the world. Even Australia is aggressively competing for immigrants, because they have the same problem.

If a person is thinking of coming to Canada, we are setting up a gateway portal on the Internet saying, "Think of Ontario," think of the opportunities, but also think of the qualification requirements, think of the labour markets that are here, the processes, and where in Ontario you may want to settle. If you're French-speaking, you may want to settle in Alexandria or Hawkesbury or east of Ottawa. You may want to settle in the dynamic, high-tech centre of Kitchener-Waterloo. You may want to be in York region, in Vaughan, one of the most dynamic, growing cities in Canada—the sixth largest, I think.

That's the type of thing Ontario is going to start to do more of in terms of profiling itself, doing more country-of-origin information availability. We can't afford just to sit back and be passive on this and let the federal government do things unilaterally. The federal government, thankfully, has changed its approach. They now realize they have to partner with us, not only in program assimilation but also in investing in these programs that we, as a province, have said we have to do and that service providers are crying out for.

I think we're on the verge of some great promise and opportunities for some of the most amazing people I've

met. They desperately want to raise their families, and they want to work. They want to work in their skilled trade or profession. Hopefully, we can start to do that so they can achieve success. Because it's undeniable—we see it all around us: When our newcomers succeed, they feel a lot better, their families feel better, their communities are better, and the province and the country are the big winners in the end.

Those are some of the general comments I would like to make. Hopefully, we can be on the precipice of some amazing success stories.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Minister. I have one request for information from your staff. Earlier you quoted a statistic about the difference between Quebec and Ontario. I wonder if you could table for the committee what constitutes each of those numbers in the minds of your staff. We could circulate that to the members so that we have a basis to discuss that further. The other request I received was with respect to the new settlement program: the amount of provincial funding and the amount of federal funding in each of the last five years so that we can track that as well for a follow-up discussion.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Sure. We'll make that available in detail.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Minister.

I'd now like to recognize Mr. Klees for what will be a 20-minute rotation.

**Mr. Klees:** Could I also ask to be included in those numbers the actual figures for the other provinces, in addition to Quebec, if staff could provide that.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Yes, certainly.

**Mr. Klees:** I note from the estimates that your ministry underspent its budget last year to the tune of about \$3 million. I wonder if you could provide a very brief explanation for the underspending.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** It was essentially the result of the timing of the passage of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, which was passed later than anticipated due to the Legislature's approval process.

**Mr. Klees:** So it wasn't a matter of cutting back on any anticipated programs?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** No, it was just that it was much later down the road than anticipated.

**Mr. Klees:** OK.

I want to speak to a comment you made about the program or the agreement that is so imminent. The last time you and I were together, I think, was at the Forest Hills Lions Club on June 7. I think you should really be a member of the Optimist Club as well—not in place of. You are incredibly optimistic. You're really basing your plans on the assumption that that agreement will be signed. I'd like to ask you about your statement that the additional funding that's going to come from the federal government will apparently not come to the provincial government but will really be federal funding directly to agencies that are delivering programs in the province. Did I hear you correctly? Is that how those funds will flow?

1050

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** The parameters of the agreement are that we will sit at the table with the federal government in terms of outlining our priorities, as a province, as we see the newcomer pressures and the need to define what our gaps are and where we need the money to be spent. That will be done up front with the federal government, and essentially the money will then flow to agencies that already exist, for the most part, throughout Ontario, which provide many of the settlement programs and many of these newcomer programs. The federal money will flow, for the most part, directly to them. That's not to say that part of the money from the federal government won't go to our programs directly, like English as a second language, for instance. Some of that may flow directly into the programs we offer, but there's going to be much more coordination, much more blending of programs federally and provincially. For the most part, it is not us recreating or putting money into our treasury; it will go to the service providers.

**Mr. Klees:** You mentioned English as a second language, and that's why I'm asking this question. We know there are incredible pressures on Ontario and on the Ontario government as a result of this shortfall of funding from the federal government. A lot of that falls on our education budget or ESL, a lot of it falls into the health care budget, whereas provinces such as Quebec that get significantly more funding have the capacity to deal with these pressures. My concern is that if there's a flowthrough of funds directly to the settlement agencies, where does that leave the provincial government in terms of being able to deal with these other pressures, whether it be health care, ESL, or whether it be our welfare rolls in terms of providing community support?

I'm assuming you're at the table; you're negotiating this deal. How did these issues of health care, ESL and other social benefits fit into your negotiating strategy in terms of ensuring that the appropriate financial resources are there under this new agreement?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** I concur that those are real pressures that your government faced and that our government faces. We all know that the newcomers who come here are a great potential advantage to us, but we need the resources to allow them to succeed. The only area I'll comment on is the immigration agreement per se. Health and other issues are really another discussion with the federal government.

In essence, what we've said is that there are definite needs, gaps and underfunding compared to Quebec, as you've said, that have to be addressed. We've said we need the federal government to acknowledge that and to start investing in those programs. Whether it's English as a second language or skills or orientation, all those expenditures have to be made. The directive I was given was to ensure that that money started to flow into those areas that in essence go to the newcomers who need those services. That's where our focus was: Fund the services. We've already got the infrastructure here in

Ontario, and the federal government must essentially underwrite those services that are being provided.

**Mr. Klees:** Can you confirm that these issues, such as ESL and others, are being contemplated and that there is provision in that agreement for those additional expenses such as health care, social services and ESL?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Certainly ESL, enrichment, new workplace-focused ESL, the various pressures that Ontario faces in ESL with the 170 countries that people come from, those are front and centre in our discussions with the federal government, that that type of acute, very unique type of pressure Ontario has, compared to other jurisdictions, has to be dealt with in terms of the funding model for this agreement, and that is being addressed.

**Mr. Klees:** I'd like to just pick up on a comment that Mr. Marchese made earlier, and that is with regard to the annual application process for these agencies. I am concerned in terms of the administrative burden. I asked the question about the ministry in terms of the administrative costs there, and I think in government we always have to be cautious that the administrative burden and the business of applying and managing programs don't ultimately draw from the effectiveness of the programs themselves. With regard to these annual applications that are made by, as you've said, fairly well established agencies within the community, this is a burden for many of them, and particularly because for many of them, because they're stable—I shouldn't say "stable"—because there seems to be very little increased capacity for funding, although that's going to change with this new agreement, much of the work that they do is very repetitive. It's simply administrative burden on top of administrative burden, when they could be using the staff time to deliver services.

When I was at tourism and recreation, we saw this same problem arise with regard to our sports agencies. We implemented a change at that time through the Sport Alliance, where there was a short-form application for agencies that we'd been doing business with for some time, where, if in fact the information from the previous years was relatively consistent, they could simply check that off and it was a short-form process that saved the agencies considerable time and effort. Is this something that you would be willing, as minister, to look at, to see what could be done to cut down on these administrative costs for these agencies?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** We have a very lean and mean small ministry. I'm very impressed by our staff and I've gone out to these agencies with our staff. Our staff is on the ground; they're very connected to the service providers and they are hands-on. A lot of this application and the requirements—I'm impressed—are done on an almost personal basis; they know the service provider agencies almost on a first-name basis, so it is not top-heavy. Again, given the size of our ministry and the experience of our staff, it is a quite exemplary way of dealing with, as you said, small agencies that don't have a lot of time and resources. Any way we can find to get rid of that

kind of overbearing application process is always worth looking at.

On the other hand, the other concern we have is the accountability factor, which is always demanded by the public and by the Legislature, that as we give out government money, there's got to be accountability. I think in this ministry it is a very personal approach, and I'm glad to say that's what I found in my first few months in talking to the on-the-ground providers.

**Mr. Klees:** It's the accountability issue that I wanted to address next with you. As you say, we have competent people out there but there's always a concern, there's always a danger, that the funds that are signed off by you and transferred perhaps get misused or misapplied or applied inefficiently. With regard to accountability mechanisms, other than an application process, what mechanism do you have in place to provide your ministry with the assurance that the funds transferred are actually getting to the people they're intended to help?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** First of all, I'd like to say that the organizations that I'm familiar with, have visited or have talked to are exemplary. Organizations like COSTI, Jewish Vocational Service and Muslim Community Services have exemplary reputations. We work with them and have a half-year monitoring of the grant, even at the six-month period, to see how things are going. Therefore we have not only the initial application process; we monitor at the half-year. Plus, as I said, many of these organizations have been in existence for quite a number of years, and we accept at the application that they've already had to be a provider. They've had the two full years of experience before they are even eligible in this field, so they just don't come to make an application without that track record of at least two years in settlement services.

1100

**Mr. Klees:** I appreciate that. I think we're all familiar with the agencies, and you're right; they are exemplary. However, in the best of organizations, there are circumstances that can arise where—whether it's an individual, whether it's intentional or unintentional—there can be a misuse of funds. You as minister have a responsibility to ensure that these public dollars are in fact being used appropriately. Is there an audit mechanism in place within the ministry where you can reassure yourself that these exemplary organizations are indeed on track?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Just to let you know, we have a mid-year accounting, a final accounting and performance reports, and we also have ministry staff visits. I think these agencies respect the fact that we are guardians of the public trust.

On the other hand, I'd like to say that many of these agencies work, above and beyond any dollar that we give them, in their extra time, their free time. They also engage immense numbers of volunteer hours. Each one of these agencies is blessed with the commitment of so many volunteers.

Again, we are going to be very responsible in the way we give out the money, as we have been. We are going to

continue these accounting processes, and we are going to continue to work in partnership with these agencies. As you said, the majority of them are exemplary, and that's the approach, but we are still going to go through our processes of accounting.

**Mr. Klees:** Mr. Chair, how many more minutes do I have left here?

**The Chair:** Five minutes.

**Mr. Klees:** OK. I'd like to begin a discussion with you that we won't have time, I'm sure, to complete, but we will in the next round. It relates to the responsibility that you as minister and your ministry have on the settlement file to ensure that people who come here to this province are in fact familiar not only with the services that are available to them here but are familiar as well with the laws of this province and this country. We have people coming from jurisdictions where there is a very different set of laws that relate particularly often to family law.

For example, your Premier recently made a declaration relating to shariah law, and in the context of that announcement made it very clear that there is one law for all in Canada and in Ontario. My concern, Minister, and I think you'll probably share this, is that many immigrants really are unfamiliar with what that law is. Many immigrants come from a country where there is a very different culture, a very different framework within which, whether it's divorce or family law issues particularly, the circumstances are very different. They come here and really have no idea what the framework is within which they can or should be conducting themselves.

Your mandate in terms of communicating that kind of information is very clear. It's there within your ministry. My question to you is, are you satisfied, as the minister with that responsibility, that enough is being done to ensure that immigrants to this province have that kind of information? And do you have sufficient budget to ensure that that communication can be made, and done efficiently?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** I think you raised a very valid point when you talked about the faith-based arbitration decision that the Premier made, that it's essentially one law for all. I think the bonus I have as a minister is that I'm not only the Minister of Immigration, I'm also the Minister of Citizenship, and I think it's a great combination. We have an opportunity and I think an obligation as a government to promote the values of good citizenship, and my ministry is well positioned to do that and has been doing that through encouragement of rewarding good citizenship, good participation and good volunteerism. My ministry is charged with ensuring that the values of good citizenship are incorporated in our outreach to newcomers and in our integration of newcomers.

You're so right: When does a newcomer get an opportunity to appreciate the customs, traditions and laws of Canada and Ontario, to learn about Remembrance Day, to learn about the sacrifices made by people who came before us, the original newcomers that came from Germany, France, Ireland and Scotland, and the foun-

datations of this great country and province? I think we as a government will be doing our share in ensuring that the appreciation of the laws, customs and traditions of Canada are incorporated in our integration of newcomers, in our ESL programs.

I've talked to our settlement agencies about this, and they are very eager to participate in this citizenship activity and to reinforce it. We are very, very pleased that there's been such good reception to linking the responsibilities of citizenship, what's required of you as a new Canadian, because, as you said, sometimes they never get an opportunity to know what the parameters are. You may get that opportunity perhaps, to a certain extent, when you apply for your citizenship and take that questionnaire, but I think we've got a great opportunity as a ministry here combining citizenship and immigration to really play a significant role in that respect for the traditions and laws and customs of this great country. The newcomers want that and certainly want to be partners in getting that kind of information and celebrating the great history we have in citizenship.

**Mr. Klees:** Minister, as I indicated, I will be pursuing this with you as well as Minister Papatello, because there are some very clear implications for issues that relate to the women's secretariat and violence against women and what the government is doing. I'm concerned, for example, that there appears to be a cut in your budget for communications; if I'm wrong about that, please correct me. First of all, there seems to have been an underspending, particularly with regard to the women's secretariat, and I am concerned that you may not, as the minister, have the resources necessary to do the kind of programming that you're contemplating.

I'll just give you an idea. Today, as we speak, in Vaughan, social workers are meeting with a 14-year-old Nigerian girl whose parents are planning to marry her off within the month. The girl doesn't want to be married. She didn't know what to do. She spoke to one of her teachers at school, who contacted a social worker. This is a circumstance happening within a few kilometres of this room, of this Legislature. Again, I think it speaks to the issue of the kind of information. It behooves us to ensure that people who come to this country, to this province, know of their rights, and that when they make the choice to come here, they're making a choice to come to a land where that kind of coercion cannot happen. That's what we celebrate, that kind of freedom. But if people don't know, what can be done? As I say, we'll pursue that, and I look forward to your ministry's initiatives in regard to this.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Yes, and I'm sure Minister Papatello would be more than happy—

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister. I'd now like to recognize Mr. Marchese.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Mr. Chair, is it possible to have a five-minute break?

**Mr. Marchese:** You're asking for five minutes?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Absolutely. Not a problem.

*The committee recessed from 1110 to 1116.*

**The Chair:** We are back. Mr. Marchese.

**Mr. Marchese:** Minister, I just want to follow up with another question I had from the previous issues I was raising, before I get on to the professional accreditation concerns. This has to do with the fact that we used to have funding for ethno-specific agencies a long time ago, probably five years ago or so, and today it has changed. The view from many agencies, including my own, is that ethno-specific agencies are more effective in relating to the communities they have to deal with. They know each other, they understand each other, and therefore would make welcoming orientation much easier. Do you have a view on this? If you agree, what might you be doing or thinking about doing with respect to this? You might ask your deputy or others if they have a comment.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Yes, I'll just make a couple of comments and I'll allow them to add their information, certainly.

One of the trends I've noticed is that organizations that sometimes in name seem to be dealing with one ethnocultural group find that they actually deal with a very diverse group. Jewish Vocational Service, which originally dealt with newcomers of the Jewish faith, find that their service providers and their clientele are extremely diverse, coming from all different groups. They've essentially adapted to the demands and the needs in their catchment area. Also, organizations like the Muslim Community Services in Brampton and Mississauga not only help people of the Muslim faith; they're right across the board. As you know, even organizations like COSTI, which started off in the days of the late Senator Peter Bosa by dealing with that wave of newcomers from Italy and the Mediterranean area, now deal with the new reality of Ontario's newcomers.

I guess the question is about the effectiveness of whether—the only preliminary conclusion I have is that there are so many dynamic changes from day to day in terms of different parts of Ontario. I look at areas like Kitchener–Waterloo and the immigrant patterns and the fact that Toronto is no longer the only place newcomers are going. They're going into Peel region, York region, Kitchener–Waterloo, Hamilton, the Niagara Peninsula. I just think it's a very dynamic demographic shifting that's taking place, so I can't really say conclusively that an ethnocultural approach would succeed. But certainly the reality is that you have to be flexible because of the changes that are taking place physically in a community, in a catchment area and the client demands you may have to adapt to.

**Mr. Marchese:** Maybe staff might want to comment on whether or not this has been on their radar screen, or whether they've received complaints about this and how they've dealt with it.

**Ms. Andrew:** The ministry funds both generalist agencies, if I can call them that, and ethnocultural/ethno-specific agencies. I think our major focus lately has been on making sure that clients, when they go to whatever agency, can get a wide range of services within that

agency; there's labour market information, ESL information, other settlement service information. That's really the focus. Obviously, in and around Toronto, the GTA area, ethno-specific agencies might be more popular than in some of the smaller communities where sheer volume means it's not likely there is enough. It does vary across the province.

**Mr. Marchese:** OK. Fair answer. Thank you.

I want to get to the issue of professional accreditation. For many years, I have been attacking, wherever I possibly could, the federal government in its role in not helping immigrants who come to this country. The federal government brings thousands of people in every year, and has been doing so for a long time, and then simply sends them off to the provinces with very little support, particularly Ontario, as we know. It includes federal Liberals and the Conservatives before them. But the Liberals, since 1993, have done absolutely nothing on this file, except that recently we've heard Martin talk about our need to take advantage of the talent pool that's coming— as if we didn't know this 10 or 15 years ago.

The immigration rules in terms of who is able to come to the country are very clear, very specific. So the immigrants that we've attracted in the last 15 or so years have been professionals. The government has known for a long time who is here and the skills they've got. For a long time, they've done nothing to warn them that there might not be the jobs in the professions they're coming with, and they've done little or nothing to help them to adjust once they're here. Do you agree with me in that regard?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** The reality is that Ontario had 125,000 newcomers come last year—many of them, as you said, well trained—and another 125,000 this year and another 125,000 next year. We are charged with settling them. But we are asking for more coordination in terms of the reality. If Canada is graduating 14,000 engineers, should the federal program allow 14,000 engineers to come when there aren't enough jobs for engineers? So you have frustrated, very well trained foreign engineers coming into a labour market where there aren't opportunities or there aren't the programs that may get them in to other trades and affiliated professions.

**Mr. Marchese:** I agree. I think you are agreeing with me. You want to be able to attack the government as well, but you're unwilling to do that because it would be an unfriendly, hostile act. What you're saying, in your nice way, is that we want to coordinate with them.

All I'm saying is that the federal government—the Liberals in this case, since 1993—have abdicated their responsibilities, both financial and social; they really have. A lot of these immigrants who come into the country are working in minimum-wage jobs, as you know, as I know, and as everyone in this room knows. We've done little at the federal level to deal with that. I just want to put on the record my unrelenting attacks on the federal government for not doing much in this file.

As it relates to the access to professions and trades at the provincial level, I personally am worried about the shift of the access to professions and trades unit to a ministry that has limited resources, even by your own admission, has no links with education, has no links with the regulatory bodies that regulate access to the professions and, in my view, has no specific budget for the access to professions and trades—or maybe you do, and you'll tell me. What is your opinion on that, and what will you do to do justice to this unit?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** As you know, the genesis of this is that the Premier wants a focused, seamless approach, and a high-priority approach placed on immigration settlement in one ministry. The thought is that we need more attention, more focus, more advocacy on behalf of our newcomers, and that's why we're making this ministry much more robust. As part of that, the access to professions and trades has been brought over from TCU along with the allocation of money—I think it's \$17 million—and staffing. The expertise is coming over to our ministry, so that we can combine the access-to-professions-and-trades agenda along with our settlement agenda, which is really one and the same, and also coordinating our efforts with the new federal agreement, all under one roof. I think we'll be much more effective, much more focused, and we'll achieve some success. Also enriching that is the fact that our ministry is charged with the Thomson report, which deals with removing systemic barriers to the trades and professions.

**Mr. Marchese:** My problem is that you say that your government wants to have a more focused and seamless approach, and then I look at the fact that this is a ministry that's least funded, with a small budget, flatlined budgets, and I almost don't see the connection. I fear that it won't get the focus that you're talking about. That's my worry.

A substantial part of the programs would function, I think, more effectively under the education, training, colleges and universities portfolio. It's for that reason that, when they had a press conference here at Queen's Park, I was supportive of the people who were at the table not to move it. I assume that that portion of the education budget must therefore go to the access to professions and trades, because education is an important component of APT. How much of the \$6.2 billion allocated to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities will be reallocated to policy and program development on access to professions and trades under your ministry?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** As I said, the \$17.5 million is coming over, and in fact I think this year it's even more than that; it's up to \$20 million this year. It averages out to about \$17.5 million.

**Mr. Marchese:** So whatever amount was there has come directly.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Yes. It's coming under our ministry. It might be helpful—I think you made an important point about the connection with education. In many ways, a lot of the activities of my ministry deal with education, skill enhancement, integration. That's why the Premier has

also taken the lead in bringing ESL for adults under my ministry. Right now, that has been under the Ministry of Education, which, as you know, has a huge mandate to fund everything from junior kindergarten right through to high school. The feeling there again is that ESL needs more attention, more focus, more resources. As you know, there are varying degrees of quality. The training for teachers and the workplace focus have to be enhanced. Therefore, it will be my charge to reinvigorate ESL and make it much more meaningful, much more robust for the newcomers, because the challenges in ESL, as you said before, are immense. We thought it was being lost in that huge ministry and we need to give it more focus.

**Mr. Marchese:** I raise the same problem, and I have the same problem with ESL coming to the ministry. Whether you were there or not is not the issue. I think ESL is an educational component connected very much to the Ministry of Education. I understand that you could make the connection to citizenship, but I am a bit reluctant to support this move. I know you're saying that there will be a more focused approach, but again, budgets have been flatlined for this ministry. My suspicion is that they will continue to be flatlined. You're picking up important parts of various things that are in different ministries, and you're not going to get the financial support, because my sense is that you'll continue to be flatlined. So a lot of the things that you say you're going to have a focused approach on are going to remain the same as before, with less money.

1130

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** That's where we get back to our imminent federal-provincial agreement that's about to be signed. Part of that is an influx, an injection, of \$40 million for ESL spent in Ontario. It also offers a very detailed coordination of ESL between the federal and provincial programs that doesn't exist right now. There is basically not the coordination. As you know, we fund \$50 million of ESL through our school board arrangements. So we've got two or three different delivery mechanisms that aren't coordinated.

The agreement will not only substantially enhance funding for English as a second language; it would also offer the opportunity for enhanced coordination between the federal and provincial program delivery and the service delivery that's done by non-profit agencies. It's an opportunity to make a major infusion of dollars and coordination into ESL, which hasn't happened. If it was a great success, I would agree with you to leave it where it was, but I think we've got to do, and we're determined to do, a lot better with ESL. That's where we're coming from.

**Mr. Marchese:** So part of this agreement that we are expecting to have with the federal government at this active table is that some money is going to go directly to the agencies, some other money is going to go directly to the province, but we don't yet have a sense of all these details except when it comes out.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Again, I don't have all of that. As I said, most of it will go directly to the agencies, but there will be dollars that will go to—

**Mr. Marchese:** Like this one, the \$40 million. The deputy seems to have a lot more information in her head in terms of this agreement.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** We're getting into details that will soon be made very clear.

**Mr. Marchese:** You mentioned that there was no coordination between ESL programs provided in the school system and other ESL programs provided outside of the school system. Is that what you would be doing?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** With this agreement, what will happen is that the federal-provincial ESL delivery mechanisms will be working together in a coordinated fashion, whether it's on curriculum development, perhaps on setting standards and benchmarks, in the examination of credit and non-credit, in the workplace focusing of ESL. That is not being done now, and this agreement will enable that coordination to take place.

**Mr. Marchese:** You are going to create a coordinating body in your ministry that will do that, that involves more staff?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Again, with resources that we're going to get from the agreement—

**Mr. Marchese:** The \$40 million.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** —we are injecting money with federal underwriting into ESL. The primary goal is to enrich the program, the curriculum, the training etc. All these initiatives will take place. The critical thing is that ESL has to be enhanced, has to deal with the marketplace realities and the language requirements of our newcomers, who aren't getting it in the present system. It has to get that kind of attention, investment and focus.

**Mr. Marchese:** As I see it, I'm not sure why the Minister of Education couldn't be doing that. Once this agreement is in place and they get the \$40 million, why couldn't they coordinate that?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** The critical thing is the coordination between the Ministers of Immigration federally and provincially on enhancing the outcome of newcomers. One of the key components for that, as you know, is what happens to English as a second language, and, if it's effective; how many people enter ESL and how many go to jobs? Or does it help them get jobs? There's no tracking of that done. Is the ESL suitable for the present marketplace? Is it suitable for people who are coming from diverse countries?

It's not ESL as we knew it when you were on the school board; there's a dynamic change that's taking place. I don't know why you're so opposed to change. I think the status quo has to be improved. It has to be enhanced.

**Mr. Marchese:** I don't know. I'm just a bit worried about the change, worried that some of these things are going to a ministry where the financial support has not been there. We might not see the enhancement you're thinking of other than the extra dollars we're going to get from that agreement. But everything else, like access to

the professions and trades here that we're talking about, is going to be of concern. Some people say that there may be legal barriers emerging from the experience of immigrant professionals in trying to access their professions, and it will be that much harder to challenge if access to professions and trades is no longer connected to the ministry that has jurisdiction over licensure. I wonder whether that's an issue that the deputy—

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** That's not the case. TCU really has no jurisdiction over licensing.

**Mr. Marchese:** Does the deputy or anyone else have a comment?

**Ms. Andrew:** The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities licenses some skilled trades, like electricians, plumbers, carpenters and hairdressers, but they have no responsibility for licensure of professions. Those rest mostly with the self-regulated professions, largely under the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, the Ministry of the Attorney General and also the Ministries of Natural Resources and Northern Development and Mines. But the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities itself has no responsibility for licensure of professions. We have met, both the minister's staff and senior staff at the ministry, with the community groups that had expressed concerns about the transfer earlier, and I think their concerns are now resolved. We've had a couple of very good meetings with them and expressed the commitment to working together within the ministries.

**Mr. Marchese:** In your 2003 campaign platform, your party promised, "We will require that all Ontario trades and professions accelerate the entry of qualified new Canadians. If after one year any profession or trade has not eliminated barriers to entry, we will act." Your government has been in office for two years. What happened?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** I would say that there has been some significant progress. A lot of the professional bodies have been very co-operative. I talk about the teaching profession. We've had excellent co-operation from nursing. Midwifery has been an exemplary partner. There are over 36 of these professional regulatory bodies that we've been setting up bridge training programs with. We've been trying to accelerate removing some of these entry barriers. I'll say, for the most part, they're very co-operative and willing to work together to remove these barriers. There are, obviously, some obstacles. Some of the professions are saying that their existing mechanisms are quite adequate and that there's no need for them to accelerate and enhance the integration. That is why we commissioned Judge Thomson to set up a framework whereby we could get a holistic approach to removing these barriers, one that is transparent and accountable, and get all the professional bodies to be much fairer, much more open and much more accountable in the way they assess applications for admission.

**Mr. Marchese:** When was Judge Thomson appointed?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** I guess it was within the year.

**Mr. Marchese:** A year ago or so? Anyone?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** We can give you the exact date.

**Mr. Marchese:** OK. "If after one year any profession or trade has not eliminated barriers to entry, we will act." Do I take it to understand that Judge Thomson may be the only action that you have taken so far?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** No. As I said at the beginning, the real success stories are the bridge training programs, where we've had breakthroughs. The nursing program has been a great success. Midwifery—they have already had some success. But some of them are not quite there.

**The Chair:** I'd now like to recognize Mr. McNeely.

**Mr. McNeely:** Minister, I'd like to add my words of congratulations to you for becoming the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. It's very important to focus on settlement services with so many new Canadians coming into this country all the time, so I think it's certainly a move in the right direction.

I haven't dealt much with this issue in my own riding. I think it's because of the type of riding that I have. We're a bedroom community, with two-car homes in most cases. New Canadians aren't in large numbers in Orléans.

1140

One of the areas, though, that really interests me and is part of your ministry is volunteerism. We were a city of 50,000 when it was Cumberland in 2000. That's when I ran for the new city of Ottawa council and was elected as a councillor. The old city had a good way of recognizing and retaining volunteers, and they were proud of it. We had a local newspaper, and it was quite effective. Volunteerism was a very big part of getting things done in our communities.

With the new city, we lost our community newspapers, and even though the new city has tried, the recognition and retention of volunteers has declined a great deal. It has made it more difficult—you probably recall my raising this—trying to get sufficient community groups together to apply for Trillium funds, which are essential. We have the problem with youth and we have the problem with social services being required, but the structures are normally in the city centre. Probably somewhere around 10% of our people are new Canadians. We have a francophone community of 30%. It's a good community, but volunteerism has become a significant issue for us, and something I've been working on. I have one person doing outreach, trying to get that volunteerism there.

Often, the awards are done through the health, recreation and social services of the city of Ottawa; they negotiate with the Catholic immigration services, which I'm sure gets some funding through them. That's how it's done in a big city, now of 600,000 to 700,000. It's certainly a lot different from Toronto, but it's still a big city from the perspective of where we came from.

As an MPP, I've been trying to do that outreach. We spoke, about three weeks ago, about volunteerism and how you integrate new communities into the overall community. I think it's especially difficult for us.

One of the institutions I felt was quite effective in bringing communities together, of course, is schools. I hope we'll consider how we're going to do that with schools. I was impressed with St. Peter school in my own area—my youngest son would bring the United Nations home every night. One of the things they said was that they didn't see colour. I'm not sure that was true. As a matter of fact, people have told me that's not true in all schools.

Having the experience with the no-smoking bylaw and using the schools and the public health nurses to get that message across, the schools seem to be one of the ways we can accomplish a lot of how we want to better our communities. We could do that through the schools. So I hope we look at the schools. I'm not sure how that involves the ESL money that was coming forward before, but I think schools are a very effective means of getting the message across.

I know that we're talking about new Canadians to a great extent, but volunteerism as a whole is something that is very important. I just want to know how this new ministry is going to help me, as an MPP, to have a more integrated community, have the community more involved and not let communities lose that connection to the overall community, because then you start getting social problems. We're dealing with the results of not acting early enough. How are you going to help me make my community a better community?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Thank you for the question. I think that's the challenge we face, not only for this ministry but also on a local level, when you were a councillor in Ottawa, and as an MPP, trying to get citizen involvement in everything from the cancer society down to volunteerism in the schools.

My ministry actually has the task of engaging and encouraging volunteerism and rewarding and acknowledging old-fashioned good citizenship. We have this amazing program called the Volunteer Service Awards. Eight thousand people get awards every year. Many of the members here have probably been involved and have attended. I know the Chair has been very involved over the years in acknowledging volunteer contributions.

Sometimes people will say, "I volunteered with Girl Guides for 20 years, and this is the first time I've actually had someone pat me on the back and say, 'Thanks.'" All they are getting is a small medal and maybe a plaque, and they're so proud. Their families are there, and they're so thankful that they've been recognized. That is one of the functions of our volunteer secretariat. They go all across the province—those award ceremonies are going on now. I know there was just one in Sarnia. They're a wonderful thank you to our volunteers, who contribute \$6 billion in man-hours to our communities.

Our ministry can help in setting up the apparatuses whereby volunteer organizations have the know-how and the connectivity of information to engage volunteers. As you know, one of the challenges is that when you get all these volunteers, you've got to give them something meaningful to do. Also, they have to be asked in the right



way. I had a doctor complain to me: “I’m a specialist, and I’m retired. I offered to volunteer. They couldn’t really plug me into something meaningful. I felt very frustrated.”

You mentioned the newcomers. There is a great wealth of potential volunteers. We have to do a better job of reaching out to them in their languages, in their activity centres, and get them engaged in civic volunteerism.

The other one mentioned was the schools. Look at the amazing contributions the schools have made to every form of volunteerism. I was just noticing an article in the paper today about students in Mississauga gathering supplies to help the hurricane victims in Louisiana and Mississippi. The schools are an amazing resource for volunteerism. Hopefully we can do more to engage the schools in a systemic way, along with the non-profit groups in our communities. It’s a dynamic thing. In other words, perhaps the old volunteer associations—the Lions Club, the Optimist Club and the Kiwanis Club—have to now be blended into new, more dynamic organizations as their demographics change. I think that’s a great opportunity. I look upon it as one of my jobs to get people enthused and to plug into volunteerism.

An inspirational event I had in my early days as minister was meeting with Marc Kielburger and his brother Craig Kielburger: a phenomenal story about how, as young children, they basically saw the need to help children in Third World countries with child labour abuse etc. As we speak, they are going around to schools across the GTA engaging children in volunteering. They have books and workshops. They just had a huge rally in Parkdale two weeks ago. They are doing an amazing job of engaging young people in not only raising funds to help children here in Canada, but using that expertise in helping children in need in Africa and Asia. In fact, I’ve asked Marc to meet with me again on how to engage in even more opportunities that we can partner with, as a government, in engaging this untapped potential of our schools, our young people and our teachers.

One of the apparatuses we have in our ministry is that we are continually looking for ways to support the activities of volunteer organizations across this province. It’s something that sometimes is below the radar screen of the media. But like the unsung heroes of our communities, we have this unsung part of our ministry. What they do all year round is encourage, support and give advice to volunteer organizations, and then recognize. It’s an immense task; I think we have about 37 award ceremonies that are organized in communities big and small across this province. It’s part of the work this ministry does, and hopefully can do more of, and partner with other organizations and even raise the profile and recognition of our unsung heroes.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister. I want to recognize Ms. Di Cocco for a moment.

**Ms. Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia–Lambton):** I just wanted to say that when it comes to volunteers—I think it was about a month ago when we had the event in

Sarnia and there were probably a couple of hundred recipients—it truly is moving, because many of these individuals really don’t do the work they do to get recognized. But because we have this program and they do get recognized, it really does mean a lot to them.

I met wonderful people from all walks of life, and one of the amazing parts of it too is that you see individuals who come from various communities, such as the Polish community or the Ukrainian community and other communities within the community, who give so much back. One fellow I met had put in over 50 years of community service and helped build the Polish hall in the area. It truly is a great program.

I remember the very first time I attended. I believe Mr. Jackson, the former minister, was in my area. That was about four years ago. I just wanted to say that I think it’s one of the most relevant programs that is there, and I certainly hope the ministry continues to do it in such a wonderful way, giving these small pins. It’s just the fact that you recognize them. It was an amazing event. I’m sure you find the same thing when you attend them as the minister.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Yes, and I think it’s such an incredible act of good faith for the government to do more of that. The rewards are on both sides, because we leverage so much work in a community, whether it’s in a hospice or helping the mentally ill or in cancer wards in our hospitals—the incredible endless hours of volunteering. Getting back to Mr. Klees’s question, it’s part of the tradition and part of the customs we have as Ontarians and as Canadians that makes us, I think, a unique society. That’s why we have to do this outreach and do this connectivity with people from all walks of life, asking them to participate and, as they participate, to say thank you for that participation. We can’t do enough of that.

**The Chair:** We’re nearing time for completion.

If you might allow just a quick question, Minister: Were you able to look at perhaps expanding the program through northern Ontario? I know it was one of the challenges I had as minister. It was rather expensive, but those small communities really appreciated it. I wonder if you might take it under advisement to look at it. I did it one year. I had to reduce costs in order to extend it, and I just recall very vividly how deeply appreciative people were that they didn’t have to drive 300 miles to get their pins.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** In fact, I had a conversation just two weeks ago with MPP Mike Brown about the ceremony he had up in Manitoulin and the response. I couldn’t agree with you more, if there are ways of getting that enhanced in those remote parts of the province.

**The Chair:** We will recess until 1 o’clock. We have confirmed that Minister Papatello is available at 2 o’clock. Mr. Klees has indicated that that would be a good time for questions for her, and we expect her attendance for not more than 20 minutes this afternoon.

*The committee recessed from 1154 to 1302.*

**The Chair:** I believe in this rotation we are going to recognize Mr. Klees for 20 minutes.

**Mr. Klees:** Minister, I want to follow up on a matter that I raised with you earlier today. It related to a 14-year-old girl in York region who's facing a forced arranged marriage within the month. She's meeting, as I indicated, with social workers today. I'd like to know what you as Minister of Citizenship and Immigration feel should be done—yes, in regard to this specific circumstance, but none of us would suggest that this is an isolated event. So I'd like to know what you as minister intend to do.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** I'm not quite sure what this has to do with estimates, but I certainly would like to see more information on it. Without having any information on the individual case—I'm not sure whether that case is before any tribunal. I think it is not appropriate for me to comment on a specific action, given this occurrence is fairly recent—you said today or yesterday. I think it would be premature for me as Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to in any way intervene with a solution to an issue that seems to be very sensitive, very complex. I don't know, as I said, where it quite fits with estimates.

**The Chair:** Minister, we'll determine if it's outside the scope of estimates, but clearly it's inside the scope of estimates.

**Mr. Klees:** I will perhaps deal with this in a broader context. You as the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration have the responsibility, clearly, for settlement issues. We had a good exchange at the very outset of these hearings this morning, where I think both of us agreed that it's imperative for newcomers to Ontario to become apprised and familiar with their rights and the laws of this land, particularly as they relate to family law issues.

As we look at the estimates, as we look at your plans for the upcoming year, I would like to know from you where in these estimates there is provision made for that kind of education and informing of newcomers, specifically related to this aspect. I'm asking you this question especially in light of the Premier's very clear direction with regard to shariah law, the Premier's very clear statement that there is one law for all Canadians, all Ontarians. Yet, since that pronouncement, there has been zero initiative on the part of the government to educate people in this province about what that Ontario law is for those who have come to Ontario from other jurisdictions where shariah law or other legal frameworks exist.

So I'm asking you, what specific plans do you have as a ministry to address this? Have there been discussions with other ministries to deal with this issue? What resources are being made available under which line items in the estimates?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** As you know, Mr. Klees, in the funding of settlement programs, which are so important, there are orientation programs, there is information given on where to access information, whether it be educational, whether it be Access Ontario programs, federal programs. So the settlement services do a variety of this outreach. They're the first contact organization for newcomers, and we fund those programs. That's one of the

reasons why we fund them, so that there is an introduction, an acclimatization, to the settlement issues.

Some of it has to do with just a lack of support, a lack of feeling comfortable, a lack of knowing who to turn to. So the settlement agencies do that, and we fund those. That is a very important function of the settlement agencies and the work they do. In that, they transmit the basic procedures, the basic approaches that we have in Ontario, that we have in Canada, what Canadian governments do, what Canadian ministries do. That's their first introduction and I think it's a very valuable one. That's why we feel it's very important to invest in these settlement agencies and why our government has been very aggressive in saying, "You have to invest in newcomers and you have to do it in a meaningful way"; it hasn't been done for a number of years. So we can't blame the newcomers, who aren't perhaps given the opportunity to know more about Ontario, more about the cities, more about Canada unless you have an emphasis on immigration and settlement issues and it becomes a priority of a government. That's why we've made it a priority. We feel that there needs to be a more serious investment in these orientation programs. In the orientation programs, there is that meaningful role that these settlement agencies play. That's why we're very glad that with the new federal agreement, there is going to be a substantive increase in these settlement programs, where we can enhance the good work that many of these settlement agencies do. In English as a second language, there are other opportunities, where there is citizenship and basic civics given in English as a second language. We want to do that even more as we are enhancing the investment in ESL. There's another great opportunity.

So I think we take that very seriously. We're going to continue to invest in that because we need that investment. You can't just blame the newcomers if they aren't given the direction, the support, the orientation. That's what settlement programs are all about, and that's what we are funding and want to fund even more. As I said, we're very glad to see that the federal government is going to quadruple the funding in these programs, and that's why they're so needed.

**1310**

**Mr. Klees:** Minister, that's why I'm directing these questions to you very specifically. No one is blaming newcomers for not understanding and not knowing what the laws and what their rights, privileges and responsibilities are. I think we agree that that is a responsibility of your ministry, and of course a shared responsibility with the federal government as well. They have the lead on immigration, but surely there's a reason, there's a purpose, for Ontario having a Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

The Ministry of Labour, as you know, provides multi-lingual information about employment rights. Here we are dealing, in the example that I've put forward to you, with crucial human rights and family law issues. My very specific question to you is, what plans do you have as minister, given that we're looking at your estimates for

the coming year, to incorporate this kind of information into those front-line services that are being provided? With all of the orientation information that is now being provided, is there a plan, given the context of this discussion, to incorporate these important human rights issues into that orientation program? And if there hasn't been a plan to this point, would you undertake to ensure that there will be?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** I'll tell you, one of the things that we're very proud of is our investment in making interpreter services available for newcomers who don't have English who appear before the courts, who appear before tribunals, who appear in situations where they need an interpreter. We have just enhanced the investment in that interpreter service being available across Ontario. I think we're the only province that does that. That was a significant investment we've made. In fact, we're even going further in that we are not only looking in the long term for the first time in the history of this province, we are establishing a standardized interpreter language service curriculum within our community colleges. I announced this two weeks ago, in conjunction with Information Niagara. That is a first, whereby people who don't have English as a first language and who may come from another cultural background are going to have access to interpreter services that will enable them to be essentially represented properly and to have their case heard properly if they are in a quasi-legal situation. I think that is a very critical investment we've made in our ministry to help give protection to men and women who may not have the ability to essentially represent themselves properly. In fact, one of the allocations was for training for settlement services for immigrant and refugee victims of violence—\$306,000. So we are doing our part

Just to let you know, we as a province spend essentially the same amount of money on settlement services as does the whole federal government. We are stepping up to the plate as best as we can, and that's why we're saying it's time for the feds to also recognize our needs and recognize needs for newcomers. That's why we're so happy to see that they finally recognize that.

**The Chair:** Minister, if I might interrupt you, to be helpful here, as the Chair, I think the question was: Are the civil rights of Ontario citizens covered in the new settlement program orientation? If we could at least have the program outline, then that would clear up any misconceptions or lack of understanding in that area. If we could have the program guidelines for the newcomer orientation—I think that was the question. I didn't hear an answer. If we can get that, then we can establish if in fact these people do get any kind of orientation about what their rights are as a citizen of Ontario. I think that's really what Mr. Klees's question is.

We'll proceed, but if we could ask for that, that would be very helpful. Then I believe they were asking, if it doesn't exist, would you undertake that?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** I've said there are a variety of orientation programs that are offered by the 79 agencies across this province. A lot of them deal with this

awareness, this orientation toward the laws, customs and traditions of Canada. I mentioned the specific program of interpreter services, which is about rights—the right to be represented properly. I made a specific reference to the line item of \$306,000. We're more than happy to offer even more, if you like, in more detail.

**The Chair:** We got a full answer to that. I was referring to the other question, which was the program guidelines, if we can have those tabled. Mr. Klees, do you have some further questions?

**Mr. Klees:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate your assistance with the clarification on that.

Minister, I commend you for the announcement and the initiative on the interpretive services. I don't mean this to be a confrontational discussion. I'm hoping that you, as minister, will share my concern, as I trust will every other member of this Legislature, that the money that is being spent by your ministry is in fact going to be effective for these vulnerable newcomers to Ontario. That's what we want.

I know there are programs out there. I know there are orientation programs, and it's good that we have interpretive services available to people to understand them. I think, given the circumstance I have just put forward to you as an example, you as minister would want to assure yourself of the fact that the programs that are available incorporate these very specific issues of rights that I referred to here. So I look forward to seeing the specifics relating to these guidelines, what the program involves, and hopefully also see the corresponding financial support for this. Again, my concern here is that the settlement services' support, the amount of funding that your ministry has, has effectively flatlined.

If there are these additional issues that we need to address, as you admit yourself, and you're hopeful they will come from the federal government, we're not sure whether that framework agreement incorporates a flow or a requirement for certain of these measures to be undertaken as part of that agreement. That's really what I'm getting at in my question. I'm hoping we can get your support, as minister, to take the initiative on behalf of Ontarians.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Certainly, the whole rationale of our supporting newcomer support and settlement services is because we feel that newcomers deserve help and that government has a role in helping newcomers. That's why the Ontario government has been aggressive in funding these programs and advocating on their behalf. That's why we've taken their case to the federal government and that's why the federal government has acknowledged that they need to invest more in Ontario into those very programs that are helping vulnerable newcomers. That's why I think it's very positive that that kind of investment will be made to protect the vulnerabilities, whether it be the inability to speak English or to know more about their rights. All these enhancements that are coming forward as a result of this federal-provincial agreement are a positive statement of our government's serious intention to make immigration settlement and all the rights and

protections for newcomers a priority of this government. This is a pointed mandate that I have.

1320

**Mr. Klees:** Have there been any coordinated discussions between your ministry and COMSOC perhaps or the Attorney General with regard to the specific types of issues that we're talking about here and the need for communication and an awareness campaign?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** I think I'll let the Minister of COMSOC answer that specifically in terms of the Women's Directorate and that specific case you mentioned and the programs they have.

**The Chair:** If I may, the specifics of the case you've raised are more appropriately put to the Minister of Children and Youth Services. The question really is, is it the role of the children's aid societies to intervene in the arranged marriage of a 14-year-old in Ontario? Is that deemed by the state to be a person at risk and a child protection issue? That's really the area of that specific question.

I was trying to make sure that the discussion was of a general nature, about advising people of what the laws are in this country, as new Canadians. When we get that program outlined, we'll be able to have some of that detail.

I'm now going to recognize Mr. Marchese for his 20-minute session.

**Mr. Marchese:** Minister, we were talking about trades and professions before lunch. I had given you a quote from your own 2003 campaign about promises: "We will require that all Ontario trades and professions accelerate the entry of qualified new Canadians. If after one year any profession or trade has not eliminated barriers to entry, we will act."

You said that some progress has been made in some areas and that there are difficulties in others. Let me tackle one area you mentioned where you've had some good results, with the teachers. Have you told the College of Teachers that they have to eliminate barriers?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Specifically, I have not directed the College of Teachers to do anything, but certainly my staff has been involved in approaching all regulated professional organizations about opening up access. I know that we established and have been working on a program called the alternative teacher accreditation program for teachers with international experience out of Queen's University. That has been a program with success.

There is also a bridging program to prepare internationally trained teachers through the College of Teachers. This is a comprehensive, multi-component program to facilitate and expedite the entry of internationally trained teachers into Ontario's publicly funded schools. The project assists participants to better understand and access support services.

Then there's another program called the Teach in Durham project. It addresses school shortages in subject areas for teachers to implement a 17-week course for 12 internationally educated teachers in math.

So there have been some investments that we've made, and they have been successful. The only—

**Mr. Marchese:** OK, so let me ask you—

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** If I could just—this might help.

**Mr. Marchese:** I have a few questions, so you'll be able to throw it in anywhere you like.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** OK. Thank you.

**Mr. Marchese:** Your ministry staff have been in contact with the teachers, but no specific direction has been given to them to say, "We want you within a specified period to break down the barriers." Is that correct, more or less?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** My staff doesn't have the statutory powers to order a regulatory body, especially one that is, I think, under the Ministry of Education, to take specific actions. We don't have that authority. But we certainly have been working with the College of Teachers and other professional organizations to achieve certain goals. I said that some of them have been quite co-operative and achieved success.

**Mr. Marchese:** I understand. You remember, the reason why this was moved to your ministry is because you wanted to be able to focus, to give it enhanced powers, to make it seamless, all those kinds of questions, but you have no statutory power to order them to do anything. So we wonder about what powers you have in the ministry to be able to get them to do anything, including your promise to say, "If after one year any profession or trade has not eliminated barriers to entry, we will act." I'm worried about what it is that in fact you can do. Has the College of Teachers produced any sort of action plan to eliminate barriers that you are aware of?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** We are aware of the fact that they've been co-operating with our ministry on these bridge training programs that we've done in conjunction with them.

I would also like to mention that one of the concerns is the number of teachers: Is there a shortage or isn't there a shortage? That's been raised recently by I think the OECTA magazine or one of them saying that the surplus is over, or the fact is, there no longer is a deficiency in the number of teachers in the marketplace. But we have worked with them, as we've worked with the Ontario Nurses' Association, we've worked with the midwifery association, with the pharmacists. These have been very successful.

**Mr. Marchese:** And others. That's why I want to go through this, because I know there are problems. You may be working with the College of Teachers, as you say, but I don't know what evidence there is of an action plan.

Let me ask you another question. If I was teaching in Chile for 10 years and I arrived in Canada, would I be treated any differently than an Ontario-born citizen with no qualifications?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** So you're coming from Chile—

**Mr. Marchese:** If I have 10 years as an experienced teacher in Chile and I come here, would I be treated any

differently than someone in Canada who has no qualifications?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** I'm not quite—

**The Chair:** First of all, I don't believe this is a question that falls within the scope for the minister at the moment, if you're asking about teacher certification approval in the province of Ontario.

**Mr. Marchese:** It's a different question, Chair, but I appreciate your trying to intervene and getting involved. I'm not sure that's your job, necessarily.

**The Chair:** I normally don't; it's just that I'm surprised at the range here, when we're dealing with teacher certification issues.

**Mr. Marchese:** But, Chair, if the minister and the deputy minister decide that's not within their purview, they might tell me that.

**The Chair:** I think the minister was about to tell you he was wondering if this is within his purview.

**Mr. Marchese:** He thanks you for that.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** I legitimately was asking myself the question, do I really have the knowledge of the certification requirements for that specific case of a teacher? I could get back to you and find out through discussions, either within our ministry or the Ministry of Education. I'd be more than happy to try to find that out.

**Mr. Marchese:** You mentioned—or at least within the circulars that come through the ministry—the Teach in Ontario program. The Teach in Ontario pamphlet that's given to foreign-trained teachers states, "The project does not change any of Ontario's current licensing requirements. Instead, it provides information, advice, language upgrading, and preparation for employment in Ontario's publicly funded schools." How can your ministry say that the Teach in Ontario program has eliminated barriers to entry? What does it have to do with accreditation?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** I could just mention, as regards Teach in Ontario, in less than 12 months, 367 participants have obtained their licences through the program, exceeding the overall project target of 288 by over 30%. So they've exceeded the target. That program has been quite successful in newcomers obtaining their licences through the program.

**Mr. Marchese:** So what does Teach in Ontario actually do? That's a better question; it's clear.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** I can get the information on the exact details of that.

**Mr. Marchese:** Either one of these ministry staff? They probably know.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Yes. If you'll just hold on a minute, they're going to try and get it.

**Ms. Andrew:** The program was transferred a week ago from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

**Mr. Marchese:** Oh, I see. We're fresh on that one.

**Ms. Andrew:** We'll get the details and get back to you.

**Mr. Marchese:** The previous ministry issued a performance report last January saying that some 300 to 500 people would receive support from Teach in Ontario.

So you wouldn't know whether there are firm numbers, whether those are firm or firmer or—

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** I just read you some firm numbers.

**Mr. Marchese:** The 370—

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** That 367 participants have obtained their licences over 12 months. That's exceeding the target, which was 288.

1330

**Mr. Marchese:** By 30%. I got that. I wrote that. So you have some figures but not others.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** I think that's an example of the type of success.

**Mr. Marchese:** But what you said is that 370 obtained a licence.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Yes.

**Mr. Marchese:** My point was that Teach in Ontario does not provide licences. It does something else, but it doesn't actually provide a licence.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** My understanding is that it facilitates the transition for the newcomer applicant going from their accreditation/experience back in their country of origin and getting up to speed, you might say, in the skill set to become a teacher in Ontario. It helps them.

**Mr. Marchese:** If that is so, why don't we simply limit ourselves to saying, "This program facilitates, helps them." Whether or not they actually get a licence as a result of this Teach in Ontario, I'm not sure. I don't know whether there's a direct link—maybe there is—but it would be nice for some ministry staff to confirm how all that works. I would not communicate this false sense of connection between Teach in Ontario providing assistance for this, versus "They get their licence," because that's the way you present it.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Do you want to go ahead?

**Ms. Andrew:** I think what the bridging programs are specifically aimed at is taking what is required to get licensed and providing upgrading and preparatory courses for aiming at the passing of those tests. It's not necessarily 100% linked but it's like going to school: If you go to class, you're more likely to pass the exam. So it is about creating a course that's aimed specifically at passing those licensing exams.

**Mr. Marchese:** I understand that. You've got a bridging program, but you don't have any information on your notes that talks about how many of these people, as a result of the bridging program, were able to become teachers, do you?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** I just gave it to you.

**Ms. Andrew:** It's 367; that's the number.

**Mr. Marchese:** That's part of the bridging program?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Yes. That's the success rate.

**Ms. Andrew:** That is the bridging program.

**Mr. Marchese:** So Teach in Ontario, which provides information, advice, language upgrading and preparation for employment in Ontario is actually the bridging program?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Yes.

**Mr. Marchese:** OK. I'll just write beside it that that's the bridging program.

**Ms. Andrew:** It's one of them.

**Mr. Marchese:** One of the things it does is to bridge these things.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** There are other programs.

**Mr. Marchese:** OK. So the 370 who obtained licences: That's a number that has been somehow confirmed; we know that because we asked them. Do we know how we get to that number? Do we just ask those participants, how many of them, as a result of this—

**Ms. Andrew:** I believe it was provided by the College of Teachers.

**Mr. Marchese:** How much do the four organizations that manage Teach in Ontario get funded by the ministry for running this project? Do you have that information?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** I don't think we have that right here but we can get that for you.

**Mr. Marchese:** OK; thank you. If you could also get the information, are they all granted equal allocations? I suspect that maybe they aren't.

The other question you may or may not want to answer today is, what measures are you taking to monitor the success of the program and ensure they are spending money effectively?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** I can say generally that we look for outcomes and results in terms of how many did get licences—that's the type of information we do track—and how many were successful. I know we've done this with nurses and pharmacists. After they go through a bridge training program, we ask, what's the success rate? How many got their licences, got their accreditation; how many were hired?

**Mr. Marchese:** So the way we determine success is by the outcome? The report states that 280 teachers are expected to become licensed, and now we have a firmer number coming from the other folks, which is 370—90 more.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** They're exceeding expectations in that program.

**Mr. Marchese:** Do we have a number that says, if they achieve 300 or 350, then by that outcome we measure the success in that way? Or would you agree with me that someone also should be supervising whether these programs are actually run well, effectively, and for that reason are leading to this kind of outcome?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** That's why we have overall project targets when the funding is granted to these bridge training partners. Those are definite criteria: "What's your target, and do they achieve the target?"

**Mr. Marchese:** My point is that you need to send whomever you've got—what we call field supervisor types or field workers—to see how these programs are going.

**Ms. Andrew:** My understanding is that the staff that transferred also monitor the ongoing effectiveness of the program.

**Mr. Marchese:** The way they monitor it is that they actually go to the local agencies serving immigrants—World Skills, the Ontario College of Teachers, the Ontario Teachers' Federation, Skills for Change—and

see how the program is working. Is that what you think they're doing?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** We first of all establish performance criteria, targets. There is very careful monitoring of the performance of that organization. It could be a college like Durham College; it could be health information services; it could be university professors in Ontario out of the University of Ottawa. So there are different partners that we have agreements with and they're usually pretty credible and have track records, like a teachers' college.

**Mr. Marchese:** I agree with you. I'm not disputing the credibility of these organizations; that's not the point. I know they do good work, each and every one of them. My point is that other than having targets and/or outcome targets, which are like outcomes, the monitoring involves actually seeing them do the work. That's what I'm saying. I'm suggesting that the ministry should have some more effective supervisory role other than just looking at outcome.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** We also get reports back on the achievement; we get endorsements; we get correspondence from successful students that go through the process. We've had excellent feedback from midwives, nurses and pharmacists who have gone through these programs. The feedback from the participants has been excellent and the targets have been met, and in some cases exceeded.

**Mr. Marchese:** I understand. All I'm arguing is that a report from an individual who gets quoted saying, "This was great," and a report by a board or one of the four groups that says, "This is a really great program and it's really helping out," are not sufficient supervisory models. That's all I'm saying.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** If I can just say one other thing: The success rate of these programs at one time—nursing is one that sticks out in my mind. Before we were involved in setting up this bridge training for nursing, the licensing success rate was something like in the 30 percentile. As a result of our investment in this program, there's been an 80% success rate by applicants who've come from other countries. That's the type of measuring stick we use.

**Mr. Marchese:** Can I ask you, as it relates to outcomes and targets, if 370 have obtained their licence, do you then follow that through in terms of how many get jobs?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** I'm not sure whether that is done for specific job success, given that the market conditions are, as you know, quite up and down in the teaching profession. But I can find out whether we do actually find out. I know we track how many attain licences.

**Mr. Marchese:** It would be useful to me to know, given that you track the outcome of the program. The point of getting the licence is to then have a placement, a job. It would be good to track that. If you've got numbers, I would love to know how many of these people got jobs.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Sure. If we have that available, we'd be more than glad to share that with you.

**Mr. Marchese:** To be able to say, “Success: They got their licence,” but if they don’t have jobs—thanks very much.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Ultimately, that’s the type of work we do in conjunction with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. We ensure that what we’re doing is not only an academic exercise but that it actually leads to employment and success. We are working on that type of monitoring together. But I’ll find out specifically in some of these cases whether there’s an exact job number.

**Mr. Marchese:** That would be good.

In the January progress report, the APT claims there will be \$1.7 million put into the Teach in Ontario program over 18 months. How much of that will be allocated this fiscal year; do we know?

**Ms. Andrew:** No. We will have to get back to you with those specifics, I think, as the minister said.

**Mr. Marchese:** And we don’t know how many people will be in the program this year either necessarily, or is that a current number?

**Ms. Andrew:** We know that for the 18 months, the target was that 288 people would be licensed, and we know that to date 367 have been. So those were targets established for the life of the project. How the funds flowed by fiscal year, I don’t have that information here.

**Mr. Marchese:** Right. What does that work out to in terms of dollars per client? Could you get that information as well?

**Ms. Andrew:** Yes.

**Mr. Marchese:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** You have one minute, Mr. Marchese.

**Mr. Marchese:** Given that I only have one minute, I will simply give up that minute to say that when we come back, we’ll talk about engineers.

**The Chair:** Thank you. I’d like to recognize Ms. Di Cocco, please.

1340

**Ms. Di Cocco:** I have to say, Minister, it certainly shows that having a minister and a stand-alone ministry for citizenship and immigration is a visible sign of the importance of the scope and the work that has to be done in that area in the province of Ontario. I think we’re at those crossroads, if you want, whereby the makeup of Ontario, as diverse as it is today, will continue to grow in that venue. That’s certainly my observation.

I come to this topic having been a child of immigrants in the 1950s, and there’s a different immigrant today than in that era. Canada, particularly, was growing, and they wanted workers—unskilled labour, basically. I just happen to have co-authored a book on Italian-Canadian immigration, and so I did quite a bit of research on that topic. At that time, the pact between Canada and Italy, for one, was to get unskilled workers to help build the cities and towns and railways and so on. The face and the education level of those immigrants in those days was certainly vastly different, coming from Europe. Today, the immigration is coming from parts of the world other than Europe, a great deal more from other parts.

One of the things I found when I was in opposition was, I went to my English-second-language class, which, by the way, is held at the Y. I think Mr. Marchese was suggesting that English-second-language was in the school system or under the Ministry of Education. But in our area, what appeared to be happening, although I think it had some input, was that it certainly had moved out of the schools and into the Y for a very long time. They had been there with English-second-language teachers to be able to, again, learn the language and so on. It came to my attention at the time that there was a book that had been in print that had helped. When you talk about specific tools to help provide information to new immigrants to assist them with understanding what their rights are—understanding, for instance, how you go to school: What do you do to get your child into school? I guess these books were written in different languages. I know that the English-second-language teacher said to me, “This was one of the best tools that we had, but they stopped printing them.” She said that it was in about 1996, 1997. I could be wrong; it was a while ago. It was a tool that was given by the Ontario government to every new citizen when they arrived in Ontario. Basically, it was a very practical book, and she thought it was such a shame that it was eliminated from the budget at the time.

To me, I think that the whole notion of full participation in Canadian society is probably the most difficult aspect of this whole process of integration or the whole process of how we help to assist in this integration process. The need for immigration is certainly being seen very quickly in—I don’t know if you know this, but in Sarnia–Lambton right now, there’s a huge, huge construction influx. I know that they are looking to the States, they’re looking to anywhere to get skilled construction workers. I spoke to a number of the plant managers there and they say that they’re having a very difficult time. They’re trying in eastern Canada, and of course the West is booming, and they’re having a very difficult time finding skilled workers.

In all this rhetoric, or in this discussion, I don’t know how much involvement—I know that we’re working very hard right now in attempting to facilitate this full participation. I think that’s what the ministry is doing. Maybe you could expand on some of the programs. I know you’ve talked about them before, but I’d certainly like to hear about them again, some of the programs and some of the changes that are being created in citizenship and immigration because of this new ministry. This ministry is not just an adjunct to another ministry; it’s a stand-alone ministry. All of these things that I’ve talked about are, in my estimation, looking at the future of what is going to be needed so that we can help these new immigrants become full participants in our society. It’s a very general, broad question.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Yes. I know that you’ve taken a serious interest, and in fact you’ve written a very familiar book on the subject of immigrating to Canada, and certainly I am connected with your book in many ways. It’s always the symbol of the suitcase, you know?

I would say that one of the most telling comments you made is about the different immigrants and the different expectations. When immigrants came to Canada in the post-war years, generally speaking, they had limited levels of education. I think their expectations were essentially to get a job and take care of their family, and being given the access to freedom and the privileges of Canada, the right to look for work and find a house. That was their hope and their dream. A lot of them fulfilled that hope and dream just through hard work with picks and shovels and taking the worst jobs, as newcomers still do today.

But the newcomers who come today—and it's a hard one for people to appreciate—70% of them have some kind of post-secondary education or training. They are generally skilled, they're well-educated, from all fields—skilled trades right into the professions. They have great expectations and hopes that they will come here and transition into Canada and Ontario and be able to practise in their field of accreditation.

That is where I think the challenges are greater now, because of higher expectations, different expectations, and that is why we've also, in discussions with my colleague the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, talked about having a proper labour market agreement with the federal government to ensure that the newcomers who come here match the labour markets here. That has got to be done. That's what is being worked on in a positive way too, and to also meet the skills shortages that we have. We do have skills shortages in our skilled trades, in our construction trades, truck drivers. There are skills shortages. That's the critical part of our discussions with the federal government, saying, "We have to have this cohesion and co-operation with your immigration policy and the needs of the Ontario economy," because if we don't do that, you're going to create enormous frustration, lost potential and skills that are basically going unused and unfulfilled.

### 1350

That is why there's been a different emphasis in the last couple of years on the program we call bridge training, which is essentially quite a departure from the approach of just dealing with settlement issues. We connect the newcomer's skills, training or apprenticeship in the country of origin and transition it to getting a proper job placement in an Ontario hospital, school, factory or office place, where they can practise their accounting skills or their nursing skills. The bridge training projects are focused on that different kind of immigrant, so we have to have very sophisticated programs with the College of Pharmacists, with the nursing associations, with all of our professional organizations, so that can take place in an orderly fashion based on their criteria, their professional body's goals and objectives. That's the big thing. That's why we're spending \$17.5 million on this.

In years past, there was very little money spent on bridge training. You never heard of it. I think it's a manifestation of this new immigrant who needs this link,

because many of the skills they've learned even in the construction trades and other trades—and I've talked to the labour unions about this. They're saying they also need enhanced skills programs, transition programs, because they have newcomers in their midst who want to be electricians, form-fitters, whatever it is, but they need that kind of transition through some training program. So you have to invest that money to enable that transition.

**Ms. Di Cocco:** It's interesting when you talk about the different types of immigrant and the different programs that are needed today. I remember when there was an attempt—I was quite a lot younger than I am today; it was about 30 years ago at least, if not more—at developing an English-as-a-second-language program. I was involved locally with trying to evaluate the new community that was evolving there. When they were putting together the program, the English-as-a-second-language teacher had started to do things in grammar and all of this, and I thought to myself that many of the immigrants who had been coming there did not have a good grasp of grammar in their own language because the educational skill was so different. We ended up changing the program to fit a more practical use of the language. Rather than going to the teaching of the grammatical aspects that many of them couldn't relate to in their own languages, because they had so little education, it was more of a practical nature. So when you were talking about that, I thought about that point in time many years ago.

Again, in the context of the role that municipalities have—because you're talking about all the various co-operation that's needed at the various levels of government. Immigrants settle in municipalities, facilitating a larger role for municipalities in how they can assist immigrants in finding whatever information they need and so on. I understand that.

In this whole agreement that is going to be coming forward, what role do you want to see or are you hoping to encourage when it comes to municipalities? That probably hasn't really been spoken about as much. It's quite an important role they have because a lot of newcomers relate to the place that they go to, and in a lot of countries the municipal government is more important to them than the other levels of government. I guess I'm just asking the broad question about what kind of—how do I say it?—process or agreement do you hope to see when it comes to the role of municipalities and your ministry together?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** One of the areas that has been pursued and is an integral part of our new immigration focus is that part of the agreement we're signing with the federal government is going to include the role of municipalities in immigration. They are going to be recognized as partners in immigration in terms of the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration proceeding on this agreement. They are integral partners, and we recognize that. In fact, one of the templates we have is the role of municipalities. They are involved in immigration decisions. They are impacted. In fact, we have discussed this with AMO. They are happy that we



are including an emphasis on the role of municipalities in the new immigration agreement because it's a necessary part of success. We find them very helpful because they are in the front lines. Sometimes they're supporting the same agencies we are in trying to help newcomers. They're impacted by immigration in many ways.

I talked to Mr. Bill Fisch, the chairman of York region. He is very interested in this file because he knows that a growing number of newcomers are going to York region. He's very optimistic that the signing of the agreement will enable his region to be much more involved and proactive in meeting the immigration and newcomer needs in York region.

I think that's the other reason why in our Ontario portal, where we do Internet gateway outreach to prospective newcomers, we're also going to profile potential communities. We have a working group of municipalities that has decided to put forward the names of four or five municipalities to start off with as potential venues or goals where immigrants may wish to settle. Sudbury and Hamilton, I think, are a couple that are going to be on the Ontario Web site, which says, "Here's what this community has to offer"—language, job opportunities, education opportunities. They are an integral part of this new approach to collaboration with the federal government as they start to seriously fund these newcomer programs.

**Ms. Di Cocco:** I certainly hope Sarnia-Lambton gets on that as well, because I know there's a real interest in attracting newcomers to that part of the province.

I'm not sure how much time I have left, but I'd like to pass it to Mr. Milloy.

**Mr. John Milloy (Kitchener Centre):** There's a minute or two left?

**The Chair:** Three minutes.

**Mr. Milloy:** All right, because I wanted to get into a broader issue.

Actually, Minister, I'll start with the event that you and I attended a few weeks ago in my riding, at the Kitchener-Waterloo Multicultural Centre. As you remember, they had just opened up a new facility, a building in downtown Kitchener. Despite the fact that there was torrential rain, they had hundreds and hundreds of people out, and you were able to speak. I know they were very appreciative to have you there representing the ministry.

The K-W multicultural centre, as its name would imply, works with various ethnocultural communities within the area, but it has a strong presence in terms of newcomers and, through your ministry, they receive money for the newcomer settlement program.

At the risk of asking a question which I know you'll want to spend a few minutes answering—maybe we can get started on it, and this is building upon Ms. Di Cocco's question—I just wanted to look at the whole issue of these agencies, the newcomer settlement program and your vision, as a new minister, of the role they're playing and the support the program provides, how that is achieving certain goals.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** I find that the newcomer settlement programs we fund, the community-based agencies, are critical partners in delivering these front-line services, again, by dedicated individuals from all over the world who are putting in volunteer time, who are putting in sweat equity. They are amazing places, dynamic places. I've been so impressed by what I've found, like at the Kitchener-Waterloo Multicultural Centre.

**1400**

That's where the future is. If you look at Kitchener-Waterloo, it's a dynamic, knowledge-based economy that's growing. The number of newcomers going to K-W is increasing dramatically, because they're going where the jobs are, where they feel comfortable. It is really a partnership between us and the government. Then, as the services and the orientation are provided and the integration takes place, the newcomers feel fulfilled, or certainly feel good about themselves and where they live, and Kitchener-Waterloo thrives on their success.

I can't say too much about the history of that centre. I think it was founded by a Canadian of Chinese origin—I think his name was Norman Lynn—who found obstacles to getting a job. He dedicated his whole life to setting up that multicultural centre, and now you have a building. I think it's a testament to so many great stories, whether it's Norman Lynn or Michael Lazaridis, who came to Canada as a poor immigrant, and look what he created. How many more Michael Lazaridis's are there in this province who hopefully we can help and nurture to achieve that success? That's what I think K-W and the multicultural centre are all about.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Milloy, and thank you, Minister.

**Mr. Klees:** Chair, I note that Ms. Papatello is here.

#### ONTARIO WOMEN'S DIRECTORATE

**The Chair:** We welcome her to the table.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Shall I stay?

**The Chair:** Minister, you can stay if you wish.

I've already explained for the record the unusual nature of the stratified estimates for this ministry, Minister, and we welcome you as it relates to matters under your ministerial authority, known as women's issues, in the Office for Women's Issues.

Mr. Klees has the floor for up to 20 minutes.

**Mr. Klees:** Thank you, Minister, for the opportunity to put some questions to you. First, a broader question: I note from the estimates that the Ontario Women's Directorate underspent last year to the tune of almost \$4 million. I'd just like your comment as to whether it was overbudgeted or underutilized. What is the reason for that?

**Hon. Sandra Papatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues):** Thank you, Chair, for your generous welcome of me to the committee. I've been waiting for the last 10 years to be on the other side at the committee table, I

have to say. I hope I enjoy it as much as I did the other side over the previous eight years.

Mr. Klees, I appreciate the question, because I think it's important to note that the whole essential plan for the Ontario Women's Directorate, as you know, is focused on the domestic violence action plan that was tabled in December last year. All of our work through our first term will be the implementation of that domestic violence action plan. A significant new portion of the plan involves a public education campaign, which we started working on from that announcement in December. The work is not completed on the public education campaigns where we're targeting ages eight through 11 and 11 through 14. What we did find is that we had to do a significant amount of focus group work, and work on the ground to see that the messaging we need to use in those public education campaigns is right, and that has taken us longer than we anticipated. We had hoped that it would be launched by this past September, and that accounts for some of the spending that hasn't happened yet. We anticipate, though, continuing to spend, because we still have a significant public education campaign to go through. It is a matter of timing, and we anticipate that we will continue to spend all the money that's available in the Ontario Women's Directorate, and I will say right off the bat that it is not enough.

May I say to the Chair that today I have, on my left, Andrea Maurice, as well as Susan Seaby. Andrea is with the accessibility act, which was a part of the citizenship ministry and has since moved to the community and social services ministry, and I appreciate that there may be questions around that. Susan Seaby is one of our fine staff people in the Ontario Women's Directorate. I may get help with some of the specifics from our bureaucrats.

**Mr. Klees:** A question that I put to Minister Colle, and now am putting to you, is that there is some \$3 million allocated under this budget for implementation of the ODA. I'm asking you to give us some detail in terms of how that \$3 million is going to be spent. It seems like such a paltry amount for such a huge undertaking. So unless there's money elsewhere, perhaps in COMSOC or somewhere else, I don't see how you're going to even begin this task with \$3 million. But please, I'm anxious to hear.

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I appreciate that question, because I think it is an enormous undertaking, and we're very excited about it. As you know, the previous government had begun the work on accessibility and tabled the ODA at that time. A significant number of members who are still in the House today likely understand the vast nature of change that needs to happen across communities.

The \$3 million Mr. Klees references is in fact an increase to \$7.2 million that the directorate actually uses. They augmented the base budgets, because they figured we're going to need that as the bill becomes law and we start moving to the next stages. We're now in the middle of all that, so we can't tell you how we're going to need it. We just know that we went to the central agencies and

said we were going to need some backup because we are introducing a major piece of legislation and we need some help.

Essentially, the addition of \$3 million will support a lot of the back office work, as they call it, in the development of standards development committees, the standards development advisory council that would report to the minister on standards being developed. All those things will take some resourcing, but not a lot, because we are expecting to go into the communities, on both a volunteer basis and a business basis—advocates, some of whom may be disabled, but with business expertise and certain skill sets in standards development across many sectors. Those kinds of committees are going to need support. They're not going to need a lot of support, but they are going to need, for example, transportation assistance to come in, if the meetings are being held in Toronto; for that matter, they may be held in Ottawa or Windsor. So while it doesn't seem like a lot, it is in fact support for those committees to get to work.

The directorate is what we like to call a small but strong unit that works across the government, Mr. Klees, just as it did when you were a member of cabinet. You saw the work the directorate does with other ministries to enhance accessibility, to have every ministry table accessibility plans. That is the ongoing work that the directorate does, in addition to having worked extensively on the act that was tabled and is now passed.

Now we are moving into that next phase of developing those standards, and I think that is where the rubber hits the road, as they say. A significant amount of work, rolling up your sleeves and getting to what those standards are, is going to start now.

**Mr. Klees:** I'd like to move on to another issue. We had some discussions with Minister Colle regarding his responsibilities as Minister of Citizenship and Immigration in terms of settlement issues, ensuring that newcomers to Ontario and Canada are fully aware of the legal framework within this province and this country, particularly as it relates to their human rights. Given the recent discussion and your government's pronouncement relating to shariah law, for example, clearly there are people who come to this province from other jurisdictions where there is a very different framework of family law. I put to Minister Colle that it should be one of the goals of government here in Ontario to ensure that people who come here know what their rights are, and know what their protections are under the law.

I referred to a situation in York region where today a 14-year-old girl is having meetings with social workers. The reason for that is that she is being forced into an arranged marriage within the month. She approached her teacher, who called in a social worker. This is a specific circumstance, and I'm not asking you to comment on the specific circumstances, but I'm sure this is indicative of other circumstances, whether they relate to this or to divorces and so on.

1410

I want to ask you, as minister, in terms of making provision within the estimates, within the budget of your ministry and within the budget of citizenship, what plans are there to ensure that citizens of this province can be fully made aware of what their rights are? Since the Premier's pronouncement that there is one law for all in Ontario, we have heard nothing by way of education or information, so that people can know what their rights are. I would think that is something that, as a government, you would want to undertake. I'd like to know specifically, do you have plans to ensure that this kind of information is part of your information campaign which you said you were in the process of planning?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I very much appreciate the question. It would be extremely concerning to any woman and any man and any MPP in the House that we would hear a story like that in your own riding around a very young woman who may or may not be forced into a marriage. That would be a concern to all of us, and as the minister responsible for women's issues, it would concern me greatly.

I can tell you that the whole discussion around shariah in Ontario provided us with an opportunity to do outreach with many, many groups and allow us to have a conversation with them, either with my office directly, the Attorney General's office directly or the former Attorney General Marion Boyd, when we asked her to consult on the Arbitration Act itself. We did extensive work. In fact, it was the Ontario Women's Directorate that lent all the staff support to the Boyd discussions and consultations and then to the writing of the report.

What we know and what we've been able to adapt from that is exactly the kind of plan that we are now going to enact, which includes a significant education campaign around people's rights in Ontario. But what we recognize is that this is the kind of information that people need to know before they may even be choosing to come to Canada. That tells us that the kind of outreach we need to do goes beyond just Ontario's borders. We have to work with our settlement houses, with the federal programming that exists out there, with embassies around the world, so that anyone who is making their way to Canada understands what their rights and responsibilities are when they come to Canada. In particular, when people are destined for Ontario, they need to understand what their rights and responsibilities are when they come to this province.

That is the work that we are now undertaking as a function of that. You will hear in very short order our full response to the whole shariah question. As you know, the Premier made it very clear publicly over the last couple of weeks. It is now our job, because there is some legislation required in the Premier's remarks. We are now working on it so that it will be public in very short order. A significant part of that will be the role of the Ontario Women's Directorate to do the education that you've referenced. We believe it's necessary. We are making arrangements within this budget process, within

OWD's budget, to be in a position to do that extensive education work.

**Mr. Klees:** Can you tell us how much you're allocating for that initiative?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** That's going to be part of an announcement that will be out very shortly, and I know this member will be very pleased with that.

**Mr. Klees:** Which line item would that be found in?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** It's coming out of one of our grant programs. Susan, can you tell me the line?

**Ms. Susan Seaby:** It's coming out of sort of a variety of—

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** You know what? We'll find that information and we'll direct it to you.

**Mr. Klees:** OK. If you could do that. Could you provide us as well with the broad outlines for that initiative, where we can see the specific type of information that you are asking to be included in that?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** We've already done some extensive discussion and dialogue with groups out there whose expertise we're going to count on for this. There are a number of organizations, legal background, etc., where we've already started the discussion with them to say what it is that we need to tell them and what is the best application. In many cases, it isn't just the content; it's the way they're going to learn. It's not going to be a matter of just putting pamphlets up in a grocery store in a particular neighbourhood. That is not necessarily the best way to outreach to people who may or may not be engaged in the general community. So we have to do some extensive work on the method of delivering our message as well, and we have been consulting with groups on the best way to do that.

**Mr. Klees:** Can I assume that a large part of that initiative is going to include the various settlement agencies across the province right now, that you'll be providing them with written material and other resources that they'll be able to use?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** Yes. As I say, written material may not be the best medium in every case.

We intend to work with all of the agencies that are funded by various levels of government that exist in all parts of Ontario, and go beyond Ontario's borders to embassies outside of this country so that we have access to people before they even land on Ontario soil.

**Mr. Klees:** Minister, with regard to the specific issue that I did bring to your attention, can I ask what you feel that you as minister should do in response to that information?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** Which one are you speaking about, shariah and the public education around that?

**Mr. Klees:** The case of the 14-year-old.

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I wouldn't mind having some follow-up with you directly about the case. We don't know the particulars; we just know the larger issue. I have to tell you that that would be a concern not only to a women's issues minister but to any of us, that people are doing things of their own free will, that people are of an age of consent as well, and that a young woman is going

to be safe in this province. I think that you and I should have some follow-up.

I appreciate that there are privacy concerns, but I think you and I will be very respectful of that. I'm happy to do that with you.

**Mr. Klees:** I'd like to leave one other example with you that you need to keep in mind as you prepare your information program. Toronto lawyer Loftus Cuddy brought this to me. He tells of working with a client who was presented with a laser-printed divorce certificate that he had received from the imam at his mosque. The man's wife believed that she had been divorced because she'd been presented with this document. She also believed that under the terms of this arrangement, her property rights had been removed. Now, this is a resident of Ontario who has gone through what in her mind is a very legitimate process. The man attempted to proceed using this divorce certificate in various aspects of his business. Ultimately, the Ontario court shut this down, but again, it's an example of the kind of thing that is taking place in our province.

I believe that a responsibility of the government is to ensure that there is information in the public domain specifically targeted to immigrant communities so that people know what their rights are and what the consequences are as well. I leave that information with you, and again urge you to ensure that there are enough resources available within your ministry, and as you work with Citizenship and Immigration, to ensure that this is the kind of information that is on the front lines, that's going to protect the rights of individuals in this province.

Would you care to comment?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** You're giving a very good example of what Marion Boyd found when we did send her on the road to do significant consultation around this. Our largest issue has been access to information. It was one thing to hear anecdotal stories like the one you presented, but because of the way the Arbitration Act has been since 1992, there is no place to go in and check in the box to see how these arbitrations, or whatever they might be seen to be, actually fared. There was no way to check that.

We discovered that what all of us needed, frankly, was a complete education around the Arbitration Act: what it actually means; what happens at them; how do people to come to do that; what kind of expertise is required in order to be an arbitrator? What we saw was that significant improvements were required. This has been the act since 1992, over the course of three governments now of every political stripe. I can say that, and none of us, frankly—many members of the committee have been here since 1992, or at least some part of that—knew what was happening out there. So the exercise was very worthwhile in many, many ways. What we know now is that we've got to collect that information so we can at least tell that it's being used appropriately. Despite that, I think there may be coercion going on in communities that we are not aware of. That is why something that is on the

services side and not the law, which is public education, is the only way we're going to combat that. We can't have a system today that, with changes that we may be bringing in, is going to drive this kind of activity underground. That's why education is going to be absolutely paramount, why we need to set aside funding in the Ontario Women's Directorate to address that, why we've already started our outreach with groups who have the kind of information and the methodology required in what medium is appropriate for this message to those communities, wherever they may be.

1420

**Mr. Klees:** Minister, thank you. You know, obviously, that these things are happening. I just ask you this question: Why has there been such a deafening silence on this issue? Why have we not heard more from the government, why have we not already seen in the media, why don't we already have initiatives on the part of the government to get this message out and begin providing this information?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I think it's fair to say that our government is certainly taking a different tack than the last governments have in terms of paid advertising. If I had my way, if I had my druthers, I would be running commercials at the taxpayers' expense on the wonders of the current McGuinty government. We can't do that any more because we brought in an act that said, "We're not spending taxpayers' dollars on what may be seen as partisan advertising." Where we used to, in opposition, watch Mike Harris in commercials, we don't have access to that.

However, I wouldn't mind making Mr. Klees aware of the enormous amount of correspondence that we've engaged in with people very directly. Moms, dads, brothers and sisters, regular folk in every part of Ontario, have e-mailed, have called and have written to us, and we have responded very directly in terms of how we feel about shariah law, about its place in Ontario, about how we have to respond in terms of public education. Moreover, we have had significant consultation amongst many, many groups. Mr. Klees acknowledges the anecdotal nature of this discussion, that where you don't have a system that actually collects data to tell you something for sure, you sort of have to respond by your gut. That's been one of these issues. You start to get a sense that there is something out there that we need to be worried about, that we have to be mindful of. When it comes to women's rights, when it comes to women having access to information so that they can make informed decisions, this is one of the areas where a number of community leaders need to be commended for stepping forward, in sometimes very uncomfortable circumstances, as you know, amongst their own cultural group to say, "You need to know what's going on, because these are the people we've met." Even though there's no record per se in a courthouse somewhere, or there isn't the big box collected of all arbitrated decisions, we have a sense that something is out there and we have to respond to that. I appreciate that you may or may not see that, that we

haven't corresponded directly with your office on this. I can tell you that a number of these groups that are based in the GTA, which you represent, have had significant correspondence with us.

**Mr. Klees:** If I can just make the comment, how disappointing it is that you couldn't resist making a partisan comment about my urging you and your ministry to make very important information available to the public.

**Mr. Marchese:** Welcome, Minister, to this committee. I'm not the women's critic; it's Marilyn Churley, as you know. I hope to represent her well. On two parts of this portfolio that you have, I've got five questions, one on women's issues and the other as it relates to the implementation of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

There have repeated calls for a comprehensive strategy to address sexual violence. You said last October to the Toronto Sun that your domestic violence plan was broad enough to address all types of violence against women. But your domestic violence plan does not address all types of sexual violence. For example, it doesn't include funding for programs to deal with sexual harassment or measures to address it and it doesn't include sustained support for rape counselling services either. My sense is that you probably agree with that.

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I'll let you finish your question.

**Mr. Marchese:** Given the quizzical nature of that look, I would just ask it a different way: Is there a sexual violence plan that includes this?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** First of all, let me tell you that you make a wonderful replacement for Marilyn Churley, but don't tell her I said that because I have a lot of respect for her as well.

I will say that for the first time in 13 years—in fact, since 1993—sexual assault crisis centres have received a funding increase of 10%. That was the first time in 13 years that this organization of people who work across Ontario to support people who have been the victims of sexual assault have seen one dime. Mr. Marchese, you recognize that, because your group was the last group that had helped them at all, and they've not seen any assistance since that time. That was part of our first year of funding and funding improvements. It was in the order of hundreds of thousands of dollars in every region of the province. That's significant, because they do a tremendous amount of outreach in their communities that speaks to the kind of education that's required in this sector.

I think you'll likely acknowledge that the domestic violence action plan is extremely broad. We have been extremely aggressive and fulsome in what we've intended to include in the plan, and it has to include that. Whether we're talking about sexual violence, domestic assault—

**Mr. Marchese:** I'm happy—

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I'll just finish my thought. It does come down to issues of control and authority. It comes down to how people feel about gender equity, about real equality of gender, gender relationships and how healthy they are. The most significant thing I believe

our government is going to do, the most important part of that domestic violence action plan, is to address the public education campaign. That \$5 million that is going to be put toward public education over our term of government, which is a record investment, absolutely has to get at changing attitudes. While our target is eight to 11 and 11 to 14, it has to target people's views. As you know, we have to change attitudes.

**Mr. Marchese:** I'm not disputing that.

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** That's a significant amount of investment. That's my answer.

**Mr. Marchese:** I want to get to that. Getting to gender equity is a long haul, and we acknowledge that—at least some of us men acknowledge that. In terms of doing a public education campaign, that has to be sustained, because I suspect it's going to have to be there permanently. We don't dispute that.

That 10% increase is better than nothing, obviously. I don't know what that means by way of money. Can you tell me what the 10% increase means?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** It was \$1.9 million.

**Mr. Marchese:** I know you would like to spend more if you could and if you had it.

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Marchese:** And you're lobbying the Premier and others in the cabinet saying, "This is not enough."

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** On a regular basis.

**Mr. Marchese:** We believe you, of course, because that's what you do.

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** That's what I do.

**Mr. Marchese:** Of course. If I hadn't been a minister, I wouldn't be able to know these things, right?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** To appreciate that. OK.

**Mr. Marchese:** I know how that works, by the way, because that's what ministers have to say.

As I understand it, what you have provided is one-year funding. Some of the groups, like the sexual assault services—what we know is that you are giving one-year funding for sexual rape crisis centres. Is that correct?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** That's annualized operating money. That funding is annualized; it's not once.

**Mr. Marchese:** So this is not one-year funding; it's annualized. OK. Obviously, some of this information is not clear to some people. I'm glad to hear it's annualized, because we desperately need it. As you pointed out—

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** We would have had a very hard time, because of what the sexual assault centres do with the money. This is program funding. We can't have them hiring additional staff, for example, to move into a greater part of the region for one year. They simply wouldn't do it.

**Mr. Marchese:** Exactly. I was about to criticize you and your government on that score, but given that you have said it's annualized—

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** Let's take this opportunity for kudos and bouquets.

**Mr. Marchese:** It's tough, I know. I hate to praise you from time to time.

But the money is welcome because they haven't had an increase, you say, in 13 years. Other groups say 10, but it doesn't matter.

**Hon. Ms. Papatello:** It's a long time, yes.

**Mr. Marchese:** Moving on to another question, I have an article by Pamela Cross. Pamela Cross writes an article in the Ontario Women's Justice Network. This is dated March 11, 2005. She says you are announcing a commitment of money. What she says is that some of these commitments included dollars previously announced by both this government and the previous Conservative government. She also says that it's often very difficult to determine exactly what money is new, what is old and what is money being taken from something else and given a new name.

**1430**

In relation to that last point, you closed the school-based services program, which is \$1.37 million, and transferred it to a priority initiative under the domestic violence action plan. For your reminder, I have information that says that the school-based services program offered both teacher training on domestic violence and counselling services for children who witness violence in their homes. I'm assuming these issues remain important to you. But what you have done, as I understand it, is taken that \$1.37 million, which we know based on information we got from your ministry, and moved it to the domestic violence action plan. That means the school-based plan is gone, as Ms. Cross says. Her point is that this approach is unacceptable, that the government must be told that it has a responsibility to support existing effective programs like this one while finding new money to support its action plan and its focus on prevention.

**Hon. Ms. Papatello:** I'm happy to address this. Maybe you can have Pamela Cross come and have a briefing directly with our office, as we'd be happy to provide that as well.

When we had significant consultation with the women's sector agencies, educators etc., what we knew was happening was that in the end—I would go, for example, to an annual general meeting of a shelter, and the first thing I would do is ask for their financial statement. I would get their annual report and look at it, and I would see that in fact they were getting money from the school board. Then I would ask them, "What are you doing with this money that you're receiving from the school board?"

Well, the Ministry of Education would have a certain pot of money that they would then deliver to the school boards, the school boards would have a certain percentage of administration that they would take off the top when they received that money from the Ministry of Education, and then they would take that money and hand it over to the local shelter to deliver a program in the school. So naturally, we realized that that created significant levels of administration on three fronts: the shelters that had to go after the money from the school boards, the school boards that went after the money from

the ministry, and everybody had to have some level of accounting back for that money.

**Mr. Marchese:** OK.

**Hon. Ms. Papatello:** Let me finish; I have to finish this. Number one, we said, "We've got to stop this. We've got to get money directly to the shelters without all these strings," because shelters know what to do in their communities. In almost every one that I've been to, they have outreach programs into their schools—

**Mr. Marchese:** You're repeating the same thing, because I now understand that.

**Hon. Ms. Papatello:** Well, I have to answer the question.

**The Chair:** Minister, you have, in the opinion of the person who's asked the question.

**Hon. Ms. Papatello:** Have I answered your question?

**Mr. Marchese:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Yes, you have. Thank you very much.

**Hon. Ms. Papatello:** We've got to be straight with people.

**Mr. Marchese:** I do agree.

**Hon. Ms. Papatello:** We can't have so many rules and regulations and get these organizations caught up in administration.

**The Chair:** Minister, please, we would ask you to respect the process here.

**Mr. Marchese:** We have to be polite to each other.

Let me understand this. What you're saying is that there is additional administrative money that's being wasted because of one body getting it—

**Hon. Ms. Papatello:** It's not going directly to the program, that's right.

**Mr. Marchese:** OK. My understanding is that the school-based services program that's offered is for teacher training on domestic violence and counselling services for children.

**Hon. Ms. Papatello:** That's why I would really prefer to finish the question you asked me earlier. In addition, in our domestic violence action plan, we set aside almost \$5 million in training alone. Not only do we have training—

**Mr. Marchese:** So let me ask you—

**Hon. Ms. Papatello:** Let me finish, so that you know. This is all very important to you.

Across the board, we have struck expert panels in a series of sectors. Educators is one of those sectors. We know what has happened in the area of training, like the one that Pam Cross is referencing, is that we have excellence in some places, but not across the board. We can't afford to have a patchwork of knowledge among our educators. So what we are doing with monies in the domestic violence action plan—which are new dollars directed to this, not somebody else's dollars—is setting out a plan with the educators themselves to develop one methodology of training of educators, and that methodology will be distributed across the board in a uniform manner so we don't have a patchwork of training of educators, which is what was happening in the method of the school board getting money from the Ministry of Education.

**Mr. Marchese:** So what you're saying is, you've taken the \$1.37 million and that money is going back to the school system, is what you are arguing—

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** Absolutely, it is.

**Mr. Marchese:** —because you are developing, in conjunction with whom, again?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** With teachers' federations, with educators and with the women's sector agencies that have told us who the experts are, so we don't reinvent the wheel. For example, if we have excellence in one program, we need to take that person and make it a province-wide—

**Mr. Marchese:** I understand. So these programs were going on in the schools.

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** Ad hoc, because it's different in every community.

**Mr. Marchese:** Have those programs stopped or are they continuing?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** They've certainly continued because shelters, depending on where—

**Mr. Marchese:** They've continued on the basis of what money that you have now withdrawn? When did you withdraw this money?

*Interjection.*

**The Chair:** Minister, I will remind you one more time. I am asking you to respect the process for a committee of the Legislature. Your microphone is off, Minister. Can you co-operate with this committee, please.

**Mr. Marchese:** If I ask you a question—

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I'd be more than happy to talk about it.

**The Chair:** I'm going to add an additional 10 minutes to Mr. Marchese's time and take it away from the governing party. I will allow you to continue, if you wish to continue in this fashion. Thank you.

**Mr. Marchese:** The Minister of Education closed the school-based services program in December 2004. Is that correct?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** Depending on the shelter; the shelter determines whether in fact they locally go into the school system for education on a whole myriad of levels. They will go in and do teacher education because on a local basis they feel that's an important part of their job. As an example, with the funding that has been moved to the transitional housing and support programming, in my own area of Windsor, Hiatus House, which has accessed money through the provincial government, has decided that in their expansion of local programming, which is what we want shelters to be in a position to do, they have expanded into the school system. What they don't have now is reporting and access of administration to get at that same amount of money.

**Mr. Marchese:** I understand. We sent some questions, and the ministry response is this: "The Ministry of Education closed the school-based services program in December 2004." That comes from you folks. "The \$1.37-million funding for the program was transferred to MCSS for priority initiatives" under your domestic violence action plan. "The reallocation to MCSS will allow

funding to flow directly to the violence-against-women sector." Then it says, "SBS offered both teacher training on domestic violence and counselling services for children."

You're adding something that isn't in these notes—maybe it should have been; maybe you should have added it—that somehow, some of this money that went to the board went to shelters.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Marchese:** I know you're telling me that. The Minister of Education closed the school-based services program in December 2004. Are the programs that were being offered under that plan at the time still going on or have they been cancelled, and is this new initiative that you have now put in place, as of when, taking care of some generalized program that you have devised?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** That's right, and because the—

**Mr. Marchese:** When does that happen?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** The intent of the domestic violence action plan is consistency. What we know happens in this sector is hit and miss. It's a patchwork. We have excellence in some regions and nothing happening in other regions, in school systems, in schools, in women's sector agencies etc. With our domestic violence action plan we have done a complete review, which we spent our first year doing, up until that announcement in December, and we said we can't afford to have patchwork service delivery.

**Mr. Marchese:** I understand. You said that before.

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I'm going to finish. We can't afford to have a patchwork. We are going to sort out where the excellence is, whether it's a school-based program that attends to children—

**Mr. Marchese:** You repeat it as if somehow you haven't said it before.

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** You're asking me about the money, so if the Ministry of Education is actually stopping that program, we are driving it to be in a very specific, formalized manner across the board.

**Mr. Marchese:** Minister, try to work with me. I'm trying to ask you questions. I know you've repeated this before and I've heard it, and you make it appear like—

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** This is a very important message.

**Mr. Marchese:** I know, but do you think repeating it three times is helpful? OK. But if I tell you I've heard it, maybe we can stop. OK. So what I was asking—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Marchese:** No, no.

**The Chair:** Minister, your microphone is not on. You're not being recorded. Mr. Marchese is placing a question.

**Mr. Marchese:** I'm going to repeat what I was asking. The Minister of Education closed a second school-based services program in December 2004; presumably some good things were happening there. In spite of your claim that there were different programs offered differently in different places, there were some programs going on that were training teachers on domestic violence and

counselling services. I generally think that's a good thing. As of December 2004, that stopped. In 2005, what has happened to replace what was going on in terms of teacher training on domestic violence?

**1440**

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** The replacement has been in fact significant. As you know, a shelter sector that saw absolutely no money for 12 years received increases of 3% in our first year in additional funding. So the shelter that you referenced in your first comment, rather than going three or four steps to get at some money for a program in a school, now accesses funding directly. Locally, they can determine what their priority areas are.

**Mr. Marchese:** These are shelters. What about the schools?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** In addition, because those are those—

**Mr. Marchese:** What about the schools? That's what I was talking about.

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** Let me finish. What you don't understand is that it's actually shelters and shelter staff—

**Mr. Marchese:** But I'm not talking about that.

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** —that deliver the services in the schools. They're actually going in to speak to classrooms and teachers. Those are the people delivering the programs in the school-based program. They are now getting the money directly from the government instead of the three jumps to get at the same amount.

**Mr. Marchese:** So the shelters are now getting the \$1.37 million and they are now going in to train the teachers.

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** That's right. The difference is that instead of it being ad hoc, or, "Some places do it like this"—

**Mr. Marchese:** You'll have some consistency. I know; you said that.

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** —it needs to be consistent because we can't afford to have a patchwork system.

In addition, the training of teachers specifically is being addressed by our training portion in the domestic violence action plan in a much more fulsome manner than ad hoc.

**Mr. Marchese:** So do you now have a consistent approach?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** We are working on a very consistent approach across the entire action plan, not just in teachers; in physicians, in front-line and in paramedics.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

**Mr. Marchese:** That's great. So you're working on a consistent approach. What does it mean? You've got an active table, like Mr. Bentley has an active table on everything. You have an active table. Who's on that active table; what are they doing; when are they meeting?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** The lion's share of people who are participating for educators are in fact the federation participants. So we have ACFO, we have the French teachers, we have the elementary teachers, we have the federation—

**Mr. Marchese:** When have they met?

**The Chair:** Mr. Marchese, she's giving you the list of the individuals.

**Mr. Marchese:** I know. I'm asking when they met.

**The Chair:** No. In all fairness to the minister, let her finish. You asked her who was at the round table and then you interrupted her. So let her finish who was at the round table. She will tighten that up, and then you can ask her a question.

**Mr. Marchese:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Finish the list, Minister, please.

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I think the Chair is being very fair.

We have at least four or five federations that are participating with us. I can't give you the actual dates of meetings etc. I just don't know them offhand. I'm happy to send those over to you, as well as the actual individuals, because I think with your own history and as education critic you probably know these people personally. I'm happy to do that.

**Mr. Marchese:** Does your deputy minister—

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** The meetings did start last spring, by the way.

**Mr. Marchese:** I was about to ask. So your deputy minister said that the meetings started last spring. What date was that?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I can't tell you that.

**Mr. Marchese:** Does your deputy know? Anybody?

**Ms. Andrew:** We don't know specific dates. We can get you the specific dates.

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** We're happy to send that over to you.

**The Chair:** That will come through the committee. We've made a note of it for research.

**Mr. Marchese:** Is there a schedule of meetings? Is there a scheduled meeting? You'll send that to me as soon as you possibly can, is that it?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** Maybe you'd like to submit some information that would be helpful to us as well.

**Mr. Marchese:** Really?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I'm happy to have help.

**Mr. Marchese:** The question is simple. The point is this: You are so keen on consistency, and it would seem to me that if you want consistency, you need a plan. My sense is that you don't have a plan other than simply saying, "We need consistency." We're told that you had a meeting last spring and we have no sense of what that plan is, when you—

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** That's when meetings started. They are meeting regularly, as are several other panels, not just education.

**Mr. Marchese:** I'm asking you, with your deputies and others, if you could just send me the list of dates that you have planned—

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** And participants?

**Mr. Marchese:** Of course—so that we know exactly this plan and how it's working, so that we can get the consistency that you're talking about, which we all desperately want and need. I'm sure the teachers are just dying and waiting to get into that.



**The Chair:** Mr. Marchese, do you need additional time with the minister?

**Mr. Marchese:** Yes, I do.

**The Chair:** That will be diminished from your next round in terms of equity, but I don't want to hold the minister here for another 40 minutes.

**Mr. Marchese:** Yes, I do have questions.

**The Chair:** Just as long as you know, I'm stacking your time in order. I just don't want the minister to be here all afternoon.

**Mr. Marchese:** Quite right. Thank you.

Minister, I just want to read for the record: "Research shows that women are at an even greater risk of violence following their separation from an abuser. Second-stage housing provides women and children a place to rebuild lives in safety and with support. The coroner and others have called for restored funding for second-stage housing programs"—money that they cut.

In the Liberals' election campaign and throne speech, restoring funding to second-stage housing figured prominently, and you say on page 27 of *Growing Strong Communities*:

"There is not enough second-stage housing where women and their children can be safe from their abusers.

"We will do more to protect women and children threatened by domestic violence. We will increase support for second-stage housing, giving women a safe place where they can receive support and counselling."

Have you kept that promise?

**Hon. Ms. Papatello:** I'm very happy to address this issue. Some of the work we did very early on in our first year was to bring around the table not just second-stage housing but shelters as well, and representatives from every region across the province. Mr. Marchese, what you are probably aware of as well is that there are many places in Ontario that don't have second-stage—I understand there's a philosophical issue; in some places they don't believe in that as an interim step back into independent living—and in some regions they have second-stage.

What we had was \$3.5 million. As we sat down to determine how we could get that money out to people in this way, when we brought everyone around the table to speak to us about it, we realized that if we simply went only to second-stage, we would have whole regions of Ontario that would be getting no assistance. We also know that when shelter use is the thing that's available in a community, it's available 13% of the time. If I can say that in a better way, women use shelters 13% of the time when they're leaving an abuser. What's significant about that data is that 87% of the time, they don't.

What these organizations have had to do, especially second-stage—

**Mr. Marchese:** I'm sorry, could I ask the next question?

**Hon. Ms. Papatello:** If I could finish this question.

**The Chair:** No, in fairness, the rules—and you referenced them when you first arrived today, that you enjoyed the process. That was the process then and it is

today. If the member is satisfied with your answer, then he will indicate that to the Chair and we will thank you for that answer. Mr. Marchese.

**Mr. Marchese:** What I have is a promise in an election platform that you made. It's easy for you to say after the election, "Oh, but we only have \$3.5 million," as if that's a fixed amount. You have no more money. So you're only given \$3.5 million and you say, "Well, now we have to consult with everybody. I know we made a promise, but now that we're in government and we're consulting everybody, we have concluded"—because a promise doesn't mean anything any more. Instead of designating \$3.5 million in funding for 27 second-stage housing programs, as you promised in the past by way of fixing your signature to documents as the emergency measures for women and children, what the government did was spread this money thinly to 70 agency services for a different program, the transitional support worker program. Some second-stage housing programs did not receive a cent from these announced funds. It's probably fair to say that some probably did.

The point is, that money should have gone to keep that promise and you should have found money to then do what you've discovered is something else that should be done in terms of helping in other areas of need, and you didn't do that. That's the point.

**Hon. Ms. Papatello:** I think it's important to note that we are not finished our work. I don't believe we're going to be finished in this term the amount of work we need to do to bolster women's sector agencies. I think Mr. Marchese would agree with that. The previous two governments certainly didn't help. His own government, during the NDP years, did not help enough. I think all of us can look back and say that. This is a sector that has not seen the level of support that's required, and all of us have to take part in that and we have to do better.

I will say that the lion's share of that money did go to second-stage. We did have to extend into some shelters because there are simply some parts of Ontario that have no second-stage.

**Mr. Marchese:** The lion's share that went to second-stage, how much money was that?

**Hon. Ms. Papatello:** Probably \$2 million of the \$3 million. I can tell you that it all went through the transitional support program, so the program was the same whether that program was offered through second-stage or through shelters. What it means is that it gets to the people in the community. So in accessing the money for second-stage, for example, they're not necessarily just helping women who are within their four walls; they're reaching out to the 87% of women who never come through a shelter, and I think we have to be worried about those women as well.

**Mr. Marchese:** The point is, they need a place to go. That's why second-stage is so key. I'm not asking you a question. You say \$2 million; we don't see that from the people in the field, in spite of your claim.

I want to ask two last questions on this, because you have responsibility over the Ontarians with Disabilities

Act. Has the government struck the ODA standards development committee yet?

1450

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** There are going to be several and we're in the midst of doing that now. If you go to our Web site—

**Mr. Marchese:** I don't want to go there.

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** You don't want to go there?

**Mr. Marchese:** No, I'm asking you. You're here. Several? What are they?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** We're working on that. Our first one, where the actual deadline is, is with the advisory council to the minister on standards development. As soon as we're through with that, which is pending—the closure is going to be some time this month; the middle of October. We've extended the amount of time to take resumé's for that advisory council, and after that we'll be releasing information about the sector-specific standards development committees that we're moving on first.

**Mr. Marchese:** Do you have dates for these things or have some things been delayed? You said you were waiting for more information or whatever. Is that outlined in terms of the plan, in terms of when these things will happen, or will they happen as they happen based on whatever your—

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I can tell you our intent is to move very quickly in certain areas. If I could use an example like transportation, we know there's a lion's share of work that's been done at municipal levels, at regional governments, where—I don't want to say it's easier, because I think this may be quite difficult work. It is a lot of work, but it's also an area where a lot of work is already done. So I think we'll be in a position to move on that relatively quickly. I can tell you we expect that over the course of the next 20 years we're going right across our communities.

**Mr. Marchese:** I attacked your government on the basis of doing something so very important in 20 years, and some people said they're going to die by that time, by the way, in the hearings I was at. I was very critical of your 20-year plan, as opposed to 10 years, which I think any government could do, by the way. If you can't do this in 10 years, we've got a problemo. The point I made in committee is, the reason for doing it over a 20-year period is because it's going to go very slow.

In the first five-year cycle, what will you be asking the committees to develop standards on?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I think every committee is going to be required to have standards and implementation in five-year phases, and that's why we have to wait for these committees to come together. I think you're probably aware of the detail of the committee structure, where you have individuals who are people with disabilities, individuals who have a specific skill set as well, and the kind of consensus that needs to be reached at that standards development committee is paramount, for one. Certainly, it goes back to the government for approval and implementation, but they have to set out and come to a consensus that in this five-year phase, this is what is to

happen, and then in this five-year phase, this is what is to happen. That's why it's so important to have these committees doing that kind of good work. They are the ones who are ultimately going to organize for us what those things will be and those time frames.

**Mr. Marchese:** I know. That's why I asked you, have you struck the ODA standards development committees yet? It's part of your mandate to be able to say, "I want this to happen today." You give them a date and then they go and make it happen. I don't think you've said to your staff, "We will have these standards development committees in place by a certain date." I think you should. Do you agree?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** Actually, if you go to the Web site today you can see that we are doing it today. So if you actually ask us—

**Mr. Marchese:** So when are the standards development committees going to happen? When will they be struck?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** The closing date for application is the middle of October, which is coming up next week. At that point, we'll have a review of what has come in for those appointments.

**Mr. Marchese:** How long will that take?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** We don't anticipate that's going to take very long. We're extremely impatient in the area of accessibility, so I can assure you that things are happening very quickly. The kind of feedback we've had so far has been very positive, and if there are people in your own community or individuals you've come across through your critic portfolios, we're happy to see those people as well.

**Mr. Marchese:** We will follow up with you on another occasion. Thank you.

#### MINISTRY OF CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

**The Chair:** We'll just ask for Mr. Colle to attend and we will recognize Mr. Milloy.

**Mr. Milloy:** How many minutes?

**The Chair:** Ten minutes in this cycle. While the minister settles in, we welcome him back and thank him for his patience.

One of the reasons I gave the ruling just recently was because it is virtually impossible for Hansard to record the kind of dialogue that was going on, so we would not have any form of record whatsoever of that exchange, if I can put it that way. That's why I made the ruling. We'll proceed.

**Mr. Marchese:** Mr. Chair, we have had no problems with this particular minister.

**The Chair:** Very good. Minister, welcome back. Mr. Milloy, you have the floor.

**Mr. Milloy:** Minister, just to go back to the subject we were talking about before we ran out of time a few minutes ago, the newcomer settlement program and the different agencies that deliver it, I realize that we're in the process right now of trying to finalize an agreement

with the federal government on immigration and some of the issues around settlement. Obviously, we haven't finalized that agreement. Right now, the federal government is funding newcomer settlement programs. Just in a general way, why have we gotten into the business and how are we different? Why is it important that we're funding these agencies? How would you anticipate the coordination in the future?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** I know, Mr. Milloy, that you have been doing some amazing legwork on this intergovernmental file for a long time yourself, going back and forth to Ottawa. I know we've had very legitimate questions from my colleagues on the other side about the details and the importance of this agreement, why it takes so long and the complexities of it.

The main thrust of my approach has been to say that this ministry is an advocacy ministry for newcomers. If you were to look at this ministry over the last number of years, and at this government and past governments, you can see that overwhelmingly Ontario always has a shortfall due to the fact that there isn't a recognition of the number of newcomers who come to Ontario. It's not only about the dollars; there's also a lack of that coordination in federal-provincial programs and provincial programs. There's also the lack of cohesion between the labour market needs and the skill sets we need in Ontario as they relate to federal immigration policies.

We feel that it's critical that we play a significant role in matching what is happening with federal government policies to Ontario's reality, to the delivery on the ground through our newcomer service deliverers, the settlement agencies right across this province. They are the ones that are basically going to be the chief beneficiaries of this enhanced investment in immigration settlement, because they know the needs and they have the expertise. They are in most high-need communities and they will, I think, deliver a great many more services and enhance the opportunities and the success rate for our newcomers, who have multiple needs that go right across the spectrum, as you know. They go from housing to job placement to language issues to just accessing basic civic or provincial services or health cards. All that kind of information seems like a little bit of paperwork, but it's a huge amount of work that sometimes takes one-on-one work. That's the kind of work we want to invest in and that we're asking the federal government to invest in in a substantial way.

**Mr. Milloy:** Can I ask about the language interpreter services, which I know is another grant that the organization is my area receives? Can you just tell the committee about the outcome of the investments you've put into that and the areas they're working in?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** One area we've invested in is the area of helping women from newcomer communities who are victims of domestic violence, so that they will have a proper interpreter with them when they appear in court as a result of some kind of unfortunate domestic violence situation, so that that interpreter service will be

available to those women in need at that time. That is something I think is essential.

**1500**

The other thing, as I said, is that we're standardizing a curriculum right across Ontario and making the interpreter skill set much more cogent, much more professional in nature. It's not just a matter of being able to interpret language. I've been told by the people at Niagara College and Information Niagara that it's not enough just to say you know a language; interpretation skills take training, and that's the type of training that will take place in our community colleges. People wishing to pursue a career as an interpreter will be able to take that, and then those interpreters will be out in communities doing work. Whether it be accessing legal services, government services or interfacing with the private sector, those services would be on the ground, delivered by a professional interpreter who has the expertise to serve that newcomer properly.

**Mr. Milloy:** I'm curious about the training program. How is it going to work in terms of existing interpreters, people who want to get this certification? Are there resources to undertake the training or is this something that an individual would have to undertake and pay for themselves?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** First of all, we've funded directly the 10 community-based organizations to provide services in areas including Toronto, northern Ontario, southwestern Ontario and southeastern Ontario. These are 425 agencies across Ontario that provide interpretive services. This deals with thousands of victims of domestic violence. Then there's the special initiative whereby we are putting in a new curriculum that's standardized. Like any other community college course, anybody wishing to pursue that high-level course credit from a community college would enter that and pay that fee, as they normally would in any other community college course that gives them a certificate in that field of expertise.

**Mr. Milloy:** But are existing interpreters grandfathered in or will they be encouraged or in fact mandated to go and complete the program or complete an evaluation?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** My understanding is that it's basically an enhancement of their qualifications if they get this certificate. That's the goal. They'll be certified as having this high-level, optimum-standard course and they will add that to their credit. I'm sure they'll be able to find more employment etc. because of that accreditation that they'll have because of the enhanced program.

**Mr. Milloy:** Outside of the domestic violence example, are there other needs that are met through the language interpreter service, or is that mainly—

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** I think we focused on that as a high priority because that was brought to our attention by the community organizations. This was an area that was falling through the cracks, because the newcomers in some cases had no English whatsoever, were before a court and obviously were at a huge disadvantage.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. John O'Toole):** There's just over one minute left.

**Mr. Milloy:** OK, a quick aside: Does someone have to be a new Canadian to benefit from those programs? I know some of the things you occasionally run into are people who are in the country but don't speak the language, or perhaps are born here but do not speak the language because of varying circumstances.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** That's one of the features of our provincial programs: We don't have a short time frame. We have much more flexibility than the federal programs. In some cases, there may be a mother who stays at home to raise children for a couple of years and then tries to get into the workplace, and in many of the federal programs, they're not allowed; they're restricted. Our newcomer settlement programs tend to be more cognizant of the fact that there may be long-term newcomers who need that kind of language or support service. So it's not just three months and then you're not eligible; ours is much more flexible.

**The Vice-Chair:** With that, we'll move to the official opposition.

**Mr. Klees:** Minister, could we have an undertaking from you that critics would receive copies of the Canada-Ontario immigration agreement as soon as it is formally signed? Could we have that undertaking?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Yes. We will make available whatever is publicly available. That is not a problem.

**Mr. Klees:** Thank you. I'd like to ask you about the process leading to that agreement. In the letter of intent signed by your predecessor, there's a reference to a municipal committee. Can you just tell us about that municipal committee? Was it in fact formed, and who participated at that table?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** I can let you know that I think that was part of our discussions with AMO. Since this was complex and of direct interest to municipalities, they recommended a working committee to deal with immigration issues. In fact, Katherine Hewson of my staff was directly involved, and I will let her give you some specific details, if I could, Mr. Chairman.

**Ms. Hewson:** The committee was formed. It started meeting in the winter and I believe it met three times. There has been quite a lot of work done by municipalities themselves as part of that committee.

The committee basically identified two types of municipalities, one being municipalities where there's not a lot of immigrants and they really very much want to attract and retain more immigration, and municipalities where there's quite a lot of immigration and their main preoccupation is making sure that better settlement, language training and labour market supports are there for those immigrants.

The committee reported back and has worked with the provincial and federal governments in developing an approach that will involve municipalities in an ongoing way on immigration issues. So they've been full partners throughout that.

**Mr. Klees:** I'm sorry; I can't hear the speaker.

**The Vice-Chair:** Perhaps if there are private conversations, you could take them outside, please. Thank you.

**Ms. Hewson:** So the work of the municipal committee—the first stage, anyway—has terminated. The federal and provincial governments and the municipalities that were invited by AMO have come to an agreement. Those principles will be reflected in the immigration agreement, assuming it is signed.

**Mr. Klees:** Can you tell us who sat on that committee representing the municipalities?

**Ms. Hewson:** I don't have the full list with me. We can provide it to you. It was co-chaired by the executive director of AMO. We had a number of municipalities on it. I'm only going to remember a few, so perhaps I should provide that to you subsequently.

**Mr. Klees:** I would appreciate that.

Minister, with regard to the broader work that you're doing, you yourself referenced, in an earlier discussion, the difficulty immigrants have when they come here expecting to have employment in their trade or their profession, and there's a huge disappointment when they get here. Would you agree with me that the current immigration system is largely responsible for these false expectations?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Yes, I concur. There are some serious problems with the lack of a cohesive immigration policy that takes into account Ontario's needs and the labour market needs. All these issues have no doubt contributed to the frustration that we as the government and the newcomers have experienced. There's no doubt that there have to be some serious changes take place to make it work better for everybody.

**Mr. Klees:** Specifically, the point system that's currently being used, that effectively, as I understand it, positions people in priority positions to actually be considered for immigration, that point system provides all kinds of preference to people in professions, whether it's a doctor—and let's talk about doctors specifically. What they are not being told at the time of immigration, when they make their application, is that this is all technical, that there may well be a preference and more points given for the fact that they're a medical doctor but that has nothing to do with them actually being able to practise when they get here. So we have people who are graded higher because of their professional training, but no one is telling them that when they get here, they may well have to drive a cab. Are you, in your discussions with Mr. Volpe, addressing that issue, and if so, can you tell us what kind of initiatives you believe should be taken to address this issue?

**1510**

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** I concur that this is a reality that is sometimes very difficult. For a highly qualified doctor—and I've talked to them myself about the frustration they feel, that they come here expecting to practise as a doctor, and they can't. I think part of the problem is that there hasn't been enough work to inform and educate the prospective doctor in the source country about what the

conditions are, the accreditation process, the language requirements.

One of the things we've addressed as part of this overhaul is that we are going to have this Ontario portal at the source, where, when you're thinking of emigrating to Canada, there's going to be information. The federal government is going to do more of that information at source so they know what to expect, what the conditions are and the processes. That's one of the things that is critical to do.

There is also information we provide called Career Maps, in other words, what you have to go through in terms of getting to the end point of practising that fully accredited profession in Ontario. We have already started that part. But there's no disagreement that there has to be a better way of letting people know. It's not as if we're saying we want to attract all the doctors, but if a doctor is choosing to immigrate, we're saying, "If you're choosing to immigrate to Ontario, Canada, here are some of the realities of this choice." Not enough of that has been done in a coordinated way.

**Mr. Klees:** And as you know, it's not just doctors. This applies to engineers and to all the other professions as well. It just seems to me that there are some practical things that can be done. If you know that you're an applicant and you know you want to come to Ontario, surely, given technology and the Internet today, there are ways to back up that training into the country of origin. If I want to come to Ontario—

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Like language, for instance, right?

**Mr. Klees:** Well, language, or even with regard to some of the accreditation process that certain professions require. Is there not a way that some of that work could actually be done in preparation for the actual immigration while they're in their country of origin, to undertake the studies, to do it via Internet and distance learning and so on? One would think that there are technical things that can be done, regardless of where you're situated in the world, that would then get you ready to transition and to settle in a much easier way in Ontario.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** That was initiated before I got to the ministry, and that is why they have aggressively pursued this Ontario portal. Sometimes people say, "That doesn't sound like much. What's an Internet portal?" It is essentially a virtual government office where you might be able to access those special types of accreditation procedures, language enhancement etc., but that gets started at the source country through the Internet. I think that is critical, and we are going to be launching that later this month as a start toward that source country information that gets to the applicant before they get here and get frustrated.

**Mr. Klees:** Are the various professional colleges working in concert with you in supporting this initiative?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Yes. I've got a list here, in fact. So far we've got the pharmacists, the nurses, the engineering technicians, technologists, medical laboratory technologists all starting to do that.

**Mr. Klees:** If we could get a full listing of those, I'd appreciate it.

Minister, consistent with this, I have a letter here from the township of St. Clair. I'd be surprised if you don't have a similar letter from them. I'd like to read it into the record for the purpose of having you act on it. It reads as follows:

"Our council has been deluged with requests to have foreign-trained doctors (non-American) permitted to be accepted in the practice assessment program in the province of Ontario.

"Both my council and I feel, with the shortage of highly trained doctors in Ontario, we could alleviate some of the needs by allowing a physician educated and trained in another country than the United States to practise in Ontario.

"We appreciate that they must be supervised and have residency for two years prior to practising.

"We have therefore taken this initiative in asking the province of Ontario to interact with the College of Physicians and Surgeons to:

"(1) ensure that qualified students (physicians) from other areas besides the United States and Canada can enrol in the practice assessment program in a timely and expedient manner;

"(2) ensure that a larger number of student physicians are accepted into the necessary programs.

"We sincerely hope you will support our efforts in this matter, and should you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me."

That's signed by Joe Dedecker, the mayor of St. Clair township, and there is a formal resolution attached to it.

Minister, I bring this to your attention because once again it's a similar circumstance, where there is an accommodation being made for doctors trained in or having worked in the US but, for some reason, other jurisdictions are being excluded from this opportunity. Can you undertake, first of all, to look into this, if you haven't already, and second, can you shed some light on why physicians from other jurisdictions are not able to access this program?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** I do have some information. In one sense, it's very good news that the number of doctors registered in Ontario last year who were internationally trained surpassed the number of doctors registered last year who were trained in Ontario. That's quite a shift. If you look at the 2,650 certificates of registration granted by the college in 2004, 41% were graduates from international medical schools. The American example is what you were interested in: 39% were Ontario medical graduates, 19% were graduates from other Canadian medical schools outside of Ontario and 1% were graduates from US medical schools. So according to these data from the Ministry of Health, it seems that 41% were internationally trained graduates outside of the United States. That is something I'll provide when I get that letter, and I'll be more than happy to pass this on.

This is an area where lot of communities are asking for our help, and hopefully we can start to move this along in a dramatic way.

**Mr. Klees:** With regard to the practice assessment program specifically, you are familiar with this program.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Yes.

**Mr. Klees:** Would you agree that this is something the government should look at and encourage the college to broaden accessibility to this program?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Yes. As you know, we are also looking at a whole comprehensive way of getting some kind of transparent, fair assessment process to take place through the College of Physicians and Surgeons and other professional bodies. As you said, it's not just doctors. We have a lot of highly qualified engineers, mechanical engineers etc., who are looking for a fair assessment in evaluating their university—and I'm not trying to embellish this. I'm just saying we have one program that I think is a success story. It's called World Education Services. They evaluate all the university credentials right across the world. An employer or an applicant or a medical or professional organization that wants to evaluate the credentials of a foreign-trained professional can get an evaluation done by this world-renowned body, a world-accepted body called World Education Services. They evaluate over 22,000 of these applications a year. So that's one step in that direction.

1520

**Mr. Klees:** Could I ask a question regarding the reference you made to the mandate you have to strongly compete for immigrants for the province of Ontario? When you're competing—I'm trying to get my arms around exactly what you mean by that. You're competing against other provinces for that quota the federal government has set. Can you clarify for me what exactly that means to you as minister?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** If you are a person who has chosen to emigrate to Canada from your native land and you want to go to a country that seems amenable to you and your family, we should be there saying, "Please consider Ontario." We should be able to profile, promote and tell these prospective newcomers, immigrants, "Here are some of the opportunities in Ontario," not only, as we talked about before, in the Toronto region but all over Ontario. "These are the opportunities for you, the values of the educational system, the freedom of religion, the beautiful geography and the heritage of this great province." We want to put that up front and let people know about it. Quebec has been doing this aggressively since 1992, letting the world know about the value that Quebec offers to newcomers.

**Mr. Klees:** I agree with you that Quebec has been doing this, and very successfully, actually. A key difference—I stand to be corrected, but my understanding is that Quebec actually has a presence in the country of origin. There is actually a presence of officials there who have face-to-face interaction with prospective immigrants. Is that what you have in mind?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** We're not quite as, let's say, aggressive as Quebec is, because I think they have offices in Damascus, Rio de Janeiro, London, Paris—they're in 10 different centres. What we hope to do, given our modest approach here in Ontario and our first step into this area of being aggressive on this front, is partner with the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade in their offices. They are opening four offices across the world—I think New Delhi, Tokyo, Beijing. We are going to have an Ontario immigration presence in those economic development offices. That's a start.

I've been told by business people, prospective immigrants, "If there was an Ontario storefront in Karachi, in Cairo," or wherever, "you would attract people who want to invest, come to Ontario, start a family in Ontario." It would be a great focal point, because they say they think Ontario has a great reputation all over the world as a safe place to invest and raise your family.

This is a start in terms of profiling Ontario and saying, "If you're considering coming, look at what we have to offer, and we want to help."

**The Vice-Chair:** That pretty well ends this round. With that, the Chair recognizes the NDP.

**Mr. Marchese:** Minister, I'm going to try diligently to get through these questions so we can finish today and you can get on to your own business tomorrow, if it works out.

We talked about teachers in the last round. I want to talk about engineers now. Have you or your ministry told the Professional Engineers of Ontario that they have to eliminate barriers?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** At present, my ministry is in discussions with them on that very fact. Minister Chambers was aggressively pursuing discussions with the Professional Engineers in terms of being co-operative and being onside in our efforts to get rid of those barriers. We have tried to institute programs, through our bridge training program, to achieve that objective with them.

**Mr. Marchese:** Do you know whether they have produced any sort of action plan to eliminate barriers?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** If I can just get to my tab on what we're doing with our friends in the engineering profession, the one program they have co-operated with us on is the Ontario Portal for International Engineering Graduates. We are investing \$1.9 million in that. The portal will be a full-service Web tool that provides people with information about the Professional Engineers of Ontario, licensure requirements, a comprehensive self-assessment function and an on-line mentoring program to assist internationally trained engineers through the application process. The ministry is currently working through the details with the Professional Engineers of Ontario on a competency-based approach in addressing the 12-month work experience requirement. It will take some time to develop the competency and figure out the course to support these competencies. As you know, the obstacle there is that the Professional Engineers require one year's experience in Ontario. What we are saying to our friends in the engineering fraternity is that we would like some

kind of educational equivalent that could be offered in conjunction with them so they could meet that one year's work experience in Ontario and therefore proceed to be licensed.

**Mr. Marchese:** Let me get to that, because you raised two things that are of interest to me. You mentioned in your notes, as part of the Portal for International Engineering Graduates, licensing requirements. Do you agree with me that whatever this portal for international engineering grads is, it will not change in any way the licensing requirement for people who have already received training?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** What we're trying to do is actually make that change, because one of the big obstacles is that one year's work experience. We are working with them to get rid of that major hurdle, that one year.

**Mr. Marchese:** But that's a separate issue. I want to get to that, but that's a separate issue.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** But remember, this is one of the stumbling blocks, that one year. If you talk to professional engineers who are aspiring to be engineers—

**Mr. Marchese:** I agree with you, and I want to ask that question. My point is that you've created this \$1.9-million Ontario portal, which provides various things by way of information, right? It's information mostly. It has nothing to do with licensing requirements.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** It's also on-line mentoring. There's assistance in taking these applications through the process. It's a support system for prospective engineers.

**Mr. Marchese:** Just like teachers, then: It doesn't get you the licence, but it helps you.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Yes, to get upgraded to the point—because ultimately, like teachers, these professional bodies have the statutory authority to grant licences. We as a government can't all of a sudden say, "We are going to grant teaching licences." We don't want to change that.

**Mr. Marchese:** I agree. I understand that. So you announced that the PEO will develop "a college course for international engineering graduates ... that will serve as an option to the 12 months' Canadian work experience requirement for licensure." That's a good thing, I think. How long will this course be? One year?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** The equivalency for work experience will be 12 months. Again, we're saying 12 months is our goal, but the time frame has not been finalized.

**Mr. Marchese:** It could be 10 months or 13. We don't know. It could be longer.

**Ms. Andrew:** It's to focus on the competencies. The idea is to focus on what competencies you acquire in that one year's work experience and what equivalent competencies could be gained through academic learning.

**Mr. Marchese:** And you could acquire that competency before a 12-month period, presumably.

**Ms. Andrew:** I think that is still under discussion.

**Mr. Marchese:** OK. So it's a bit fluid. All right.

According to your press release, the portal was supposed to go on-line in summer 2005. Did it? As far as I know, it hasn't.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** We are still in negotiations with our professional engineering body working out the details of this, let's say, accessibility process through our bridge program. We're actively involved in face-to-face discussions with the engineers in terms of accommodating newcomers by allowing this non-job—you know, it's like Catch-22: "You can't be a professional engineer in Ontario because you don't have the work experience." We're saying, "Let's find a way." We're pushing to say, "Let's find a way of overcoming that."

1530

**Mr. Marchese:** Right. Let me say this to you. I have a notice from the June 23 meeting of the PEO, and this item seems relevant to our discussion. I'll quote: "Council defeated a motion to allow the president and CEO/registrar to finalize a contract with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities for the Ontario portal for international engineering graduates. MTCU announced funding for the project in October 2004; however, when the contract was prepared, the ministry had included items that were unacceptable to PEO, including a proposal to develop a college course for international engineering graduates that would substitute for the 12 months of Canadian work experience required for permanent licensure." Is it fair to say that your plans for engineering announced in October are in shambles?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** No, because we are taking aggressive steps to get the Professional Engineers of Ontario to co-operate with us to enable these highly trained individuals to get access. We've got a plan, we've got a proposal that's very clear and fair, and we need to get the Professional Engineers of Ontario to sign this agreement so this will happen. We are pursuing that. We have not, in any way, shape or form, removed ourselves from this.

**Mr. Marchese:** Even though they said no, you're saying, "We're still working on it"?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** We are still pursuing it, and we hope that this will come to pass. But this has not been easy. As you know, past governments have never even gone there. We are in direct negotiations on specific proposals on how to get rid of these barriers, and this is a specific example. We're going to keep working at it.

**Mr. Marchese:** The same notice from the PEO also notes, "a new draft contract dated June 23, 2005"—let me ask you, when did you get there?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Just a few days after.

**Mr. Marchese:** "A new draft contract dated June 23, 2005, omits the unacceptable conditions," namely, the proposal for a college program that substitutes for the 12-months' Canadian work experience. So this new contract omits that. Why did your government withdraw this?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** We could have that explained. I'll let staff do that. Remember, we are in active discussions on this very challenging issue with our friends in the engineering profession. Maybe I'll let the deputy—would it be helpful in the discussion? I don't know.

**Mr. Marchese:** She's new too, but if they have some knowledge of this—

**Ms. Andrew:** I think it would be fair to say that the negotiations relative to this particular profession have not been in a straight line. We are still negotiating. We haven't stopped negotiating, and we have not withdrawn the desire to focus on a competency-based alternative to the work experience. The actual programs transferred from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities about two weeks ago are actually in the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities estimates, not ours—

**Mr. Marchese:** Right.

**Ms. Andrew:** —so I don't have the details at that level. Given privacy considerations, if there's more we can tell you, I will get back to you with more information.

**Mr. Marchese:** I get the impression that one of those ministry people should have been here to assist.

**Ms. Andrew:** They had their day yesterday.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** You could have called them yesterday. That was my understanding.

**Mr. Marchese:** That's too bad.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** You missed your opportunity.

**Mr. Marchese:** The problem I have, Minister, is that the new draft contract, dated June 23, omits the condition you're trying to get. I know the deputy is saying no, but that was the contract. My hope is that you're withdrawing that contract and getting back into what you intend to do aggressively with the engineers. Is that it?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** All I can say is that because this was under training, colleges and universities, they would have loved to answer that question yesterday, if you had called them. As I said, our intent is not to say that it's in any way something we are putting on the back burner. We're still pursuing that.

**Mr. Marchese:** I know that, Minister, but you understand how difficult this is. If the other ministry, which has been working on this for quite some time, has not had the success to convince that regulatory body of engineers to accept this course, which I think is a good idea, how is your ministry, which doesn't have any regulatory power over the professional engineers, going to be any more aggressive or stronger or more effective in getting this job done?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** This is why we're taking this comprehensive look at having a registration process, an accreditation process that is transparent and accountable through all these 36 regulatory bodies. That is the approach we're going to take. It's not just the engineers. I might say that the majority of them have been fairly co-operative. With some, there are 100 years of history where they've never had any intervention of this kind.

We are going to continue to raise the profile. We're going to continue to treat it as a comprehensive agenda item; it's not just this one line item with the engineers. We are going to move on all fronts in getting some kind of process that is accountable, rationalized and not hit-and-miss from one profession to another.

**Mr. Marchese:** I agree.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** That's what we're going to try to do.

**Mr. Marchese:** The problem, Minister, is that I don't see this plan from the government. Your promise says, "If after one year a trade or profession has not eliminated barriers to entry, we will act." We're two years into that mandate, and these professional engineers who come from other countries tell us it's nearly impossible to get the Ontario experience they need, and now that that program has been abandoned on the basis that the engineers have said no to the previous ministry, how are they going to get that experience? What are you going to say to them?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** That's why we put in these 35 bridge training programs, which are really ways of overcoming those barriers. We've been successful with the nurses, the midwives, the pharmacists. The veterinary college—we've had a very good program. I don't know if you're aware of that. There's a shortage of veterinary doctors in Ontario. They've co-operated with our ministry with that bridge training program—the University of Guelph. There have been many successes. That's not to say we've achieved all the successes we aspire to, but we are going to continue on this, and we encourage—

**Mr. Marchese:** I know that. You're saying you're going to do your best and so on. All I'm saying is that this bridge training program might help some other professions. For these professional engineers, without that year's experience they are lost.

Your October release mentions that this program will cost \$2 million. What happened to the money since the program is clearly in shambles or not going ahead?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Again, don't be such a pessimist. We have allocated \$1.9 million for this program. We are committed to investing it in this bridge training program for foreign-trained engineers.

**Mr. Marchese:** It's not working. They need the experience.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** After 100 years of neglecting this file, we've got a government that's finally doing something about it aggressively. Just give us a few months, OK? Give us a few months at least. I think the engineers are going to be persuaded to look at the opportunities they may be missing and the role they have to play in ensuring that Ontarians get an opportunity to have these foreign-trained professionals work in Ontario.

**Mr. Marchese:** All I'm telling you is that these people are looking to the promise that says, "If after one year a trade or profession has not eliminated barriers to entry, we will act." I'm sorry to tell you, they are not going to be comforted by your optimism.

Let me move on, because I'm trying to finish for the day here; otherwise, we're not going to do it.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** You're a pessimist; I'm an optimist. OK?

**Mr. Marchese:** I know.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** It's usually the reverse, isn't it?

**Mr. Marchese:** But I'm looking to the promises; that's all.

Skilled trades: Other than simply asking foreign-trained electricians and carpenters to start at the begin-



ning of their training, what plan has your government produced to acknowledge their previous experience?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** That's another area where we have many highly skilled individuals coming to Ontario, wanting to work. There's a shortage of many skilled trades. We are trying to do our best. I've also discussed this with labour union leaders, who have been working on enhanced training and skilled trades transition from skill sets from origin countries to Canada. This is one area where there has to be more work. I can't give you the specific answer on recognition of years in countries of origin, but I'd be more than happy to try and find that out.

1540

**Mr. Marchese:** In terms of acknowledging their previous experience, has the government done anything to say, "This is their previous experience. We acknowledge it, and this is what it's worth"?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Remember, it's not just government by itself. We have trade unions with collective agreements. We have professional organizations and associations. So they also govern the qualifications and the accreditation. We can't run roughshod over all these trade unions and the professional organizations. That's why we've taken this bridge training approach and are working with them, as I've said.

You're pessimistic, looking at one or two that are not succeeding, but as I said, there's been a major breakthrough in the last couple of years on this front.

**Mr. Marchese:** OK. Your progress report notes that you're investing \$928,000 over two years to help foreign trade, industrial and construction and maintenance electricians and industrial mechanics pass their certificate of qualification. Do you know how many people have graduated from this program so far? Does the ministry know?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** The apprenticeship program is under training, colleges and universities.

**Mr. Marchese:** When you get that information, it would be helpful to pass it on.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** I think we should ask TCU.

**Ms. Andrew:** The apprenticeship and skilled trades program is the responsibility of training, colleges and universities, separate and apart from international or not. Perhaps you could direct the question to them.

**Mr. Marchese:** OK. So the other questions connected to this: According to the Web site of Skills for Change, to date, 53 have successfully achieved the status of journeyman by passing their certificate of qualification examination. You wouldn't have any information in that regard? OK. So we'll leave those questions, then, because they're not pertinent to you.

Let's move to doctors and surgeons. Has your government told the College of Physicians and Surgeons that they have to eliminate barriers?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** We have, like other professional organizations, indicated in the past—the minister has indicated—that we are looking for ways to allow foreign-trained doctors, professionals, to overcome barriers,

overcome obstacles to being accredited in Ontario, and that's why part of this mandate is divided with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, where they've invested \$26 million in overcoming these barriers to becoming doctors in Ontario.

So there's an aggressive program. I know the minister is allocating 200 spots for foreign-trained doctors, accessing their profession in Ontario. So this is something we do in conjunction, but the lead right now on the medical front is taken by Minister Smitherman and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

**Mr. Marchese:** I noticed the following on the International Medical Graduates—Ontario Web site: "Acceptance into any of IMG—Ontario's programs does not guarantee a licence from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario." So the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario has other regulatory requirements beyond those required by the International Medical Graduates. What's the point of offering a foreign-trained doctor a streamlined process if it doesn't qualify you to practise medicine at the end?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Remember the differentiation between the licence-granting body, which has those powers granted to it by this assembly, going back generations, and the roles and functions of a government ministry that's trying, in essence, to give the prospective applicant the background, the transition information, the acclimatization, you might say, to the Canadian professional workplace. That's what our role is. We see ourselves as a bridge, as a name, a help. We don't grant the medical licence directly.

**Mr. Marchese:** My problem, Minister, is that—

**The Vice-Chair:** That's been an extremely interesting discussion, and that ends this round. We'll now switch to the government side.

**Ms. Di Cocco:** In discussions with the other members, so that we can maximize our time tomorrow with the Minister of Agriculture, we were hoping that we could end with this ministry today, if it's, again, in agreement with all the members. I understand Mr. Marchese was looking to finish up his questions.

**Mr. Marchese:** Yes. I would like to finish today—

**The Vice-Chair:** Through the Chair. Ms. Di Cocco has raised a point that the intent in the long-term here is to finish with this ministry today, for expeditious use of time. With that, there would have to be some reconciliation amongst the members. The Chair recognizes Mr. Marchese.

**Mr. Marchese:** Thank you. Do you have questions after this as well?

**Mr. Klees:** It depends on how long yours are.

**Mr. Marchese:** I only have about seven more minutes, I think.

**The Vice-Chair:** There's a total of 15 minutes left; if we could come to some agreement of splitting that time or something like that.

**Mr. Marchese:** Let's try to do that. Or, to agree that if we go to 4:10, it should solve it, right?

**Ms. Di Cocco:** Yes, but we were hoping that—if you have finished your questions, I certainly—

**Mr. Marchese:** I would like to finish my questions. If I can't finish them, then we have to come back tomorrow. But if we extend the time by a few minutes, then we can finish today.

**Ms. Di Cocco:** All right.

**The Vice-Chair:** Any further comments? It looks like we have agreement. The best way, if the government members want time—otherwise we could give Mr. Marchese his seven minutes, and the rest, and then we'll take our votes and we'll be out of here just after four. That accommodates the minister without any inconvenience, I would hope?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** That's fine.

**The Vice-Chair:** Very good. With that, the Chair would recognize Mr. Marchese.

**Mr. Marchese:** Thank you. Here's the problem I have, Minister, with those remarks. We know that these regulatory bodies are there. We know that you are the government. If governments are powerless, we're in trouble. If we cannot convince these bodies that they've got to change their practices, we are not a government. It means we're powerless. It also means that moving this sector from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities to you is just as bad, or worse. What's the point of moving this to a ministry, where we're saying we're going to focus and make it seamless and somehow concentrate attention, and in the end, when we ask all these questions, there's not much we can do? You see how powerless I feel. Imagine how difficult it must be for the people out there suffering this problem, unless we get a handle on this and say to these bodies, "You've got to change your practices," in my view.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** In fact, that is the other side of the coin. That's why we're doing it: It's to put a new set of resources, a new focus, because this also leverages the federal buy-in. "Buy-in" is the word, which we've never had before. We are going to have the federal buy-in, we're going to have the coordination, we're going to have a ministry that's going to be focused on this advocacy so that we can have discussions and we can have changes with our regulatory bodies and the way they practise. Remember, there have been many successes in the two short years with our bridge training programs, because you single out a couple that have very long traditions of being autonomous and not wanting government. As a government, I think we have the potential to make this change, because we've done it with nursing, we've done it with the pharmacists, and there are some successes there.

**Mr. Marchese:** I hear you. You've said that. I agree.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Let's tell that to the engineers and others.

**Mr. Marchese:** Minister, repeating it is not going to help. The fact that there might have been some successes in some areas is not going to help the teachers or the engineers or the doctors. I'm making a statement.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** But you can't always use a hammer. You sometimes have to discuss; you have to persuade.

**Mr. Marchese:** My point is that those who are not getting the success they are looking for to get the jobs in their fields are not going to be happy to hear you say, "But look, I know you engineers are having a difficult time, but some nurses are doing well, or some vets are doing well." It just doesn't work. You can make that point, but I'm not going to make that point. I certainly find it indefensible. Regulatory bodies have to be forced to open their doors and break down their barriers. If not, something has to change.

International Medical Graduates—Ontario accepted 154 students last year; 950 applied. My sense is that you don't know how many would have liked to apply. Is that correct? You don't have access to that.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Again, I don't know the specifics. All I know is that there has been some marked success. The fact is that for the first time in many years the number of doctors registered in Ontario last year who were internationally trained surpassed the number of doctors registered last year who were trained in Ontario. Some 41% were graduates from international medical schools. That's quite an impressive number, and that's where I'm much more of an optimist, because I think things are working. It's not to say there that isn't much more work to do. I agree with you there.

**Mr. Marchese:** Here's what's working. We need doctors. Even the Tories recognize that we need doctors, and in their last dying days they increased it—I don't know—from 20% to 34% to 50%, God bless them. In eight years they increased it by 20% or 25%, but it was in recognition that we have a shortage of doctors. It wasn't because all of a sudden the government said, "We're doing better than they did." It's because all of a sudden we're saying, "My God, we need doctors," so the doors have opened a little bit. If we've opened the doors a little bit, we can open them a little more. It's a matter of will. It's a matter of willpower for the government to say, "We're going to fix this," rather than, "We have put in more doctors." I think you follow my point.

I wanted to know how many would have liked to apply; how many foreign-trained medical professionals would like to practise medicine in Ontario; why, in the midst of a doctor shortage, nearly 800 applicants were rejected. So we have a shortage. You hired much more than they did; good. But there are 800 applicants who in my view are ready to go, and they're not getting in.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** We can get that information from the Ministry of Health. But you can't always point fingers. I can say that there was an NDP government that closed up spaces in medical schools. Where was the foresight there? Hindsight is always 20/20, but we have to do a lot more, recognizing that there are needs. You can't turn the tap on and off, right? I'm not condemning you for what you did or didn't do, but I think we should look toward opening these doors any way we can. I agree that we have to open these doors more aggressively.

**Mr. Marchese:** I'd just like to tell you that neither Liberals nor Tories understand that in the 1990s—either you refuse to understand or you don't know; one or the other—the mood in the country, coming from the feds, said that we have an abundance of doctors. So you're right that we should have said to the feds and all the others, "You people are wrong, and we have a better vision." But you're right. We may not have had the vision to tell the specialists up there that they were wrong. I just thought I'd point that out.

**Mr. Klees:** Good.

**Mr. Marchese:** Currently—for Frank's benefit, because the Tories didn't understand this either—the International Medical Graduates—Ontario only accredits family doctors. Do you know, Deputy or Minister, what the plans are to expand the program to other specialists?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** I would say these are specific to Ministry of Health decisions. I think it would be more appropriately answered by them.

**Mr. Marchese:** But once you coordinate this, how involved are you going to be in all this?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** We're going to work collaboratively with the Ministry of Health in this area. We're going to continue to be there with them because we can't extricate the Ministry of Health from the whole issue of accreditation for doctors.

**Mr. Marchese:** It's going to be tough, I can tell you.

**The Vice-Chair:** Mr. Marchese—

**Mr. Marchese:** I'm almost there.

**The Vice-Chair:** Very good; thank you.

**Mr. Marchese:** Social workers: The Canadian Association of Social Workers charges—

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** We've got a—

**Mr. Marchese:** A book. I know. I used to have one of those too.

The Canadian Association of Social Workers charges \$250 to assess credentials. Do you think that's fair?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** I can't comment on the fairness of a fee that an association charges. All I can say is that we are seeing a good deal of co-operation from some of these agencies. Some of them are very fair, because there is a cost to them; some are just breaking even in their cost. I don't want to comment specifically on that one because I don't know the details of what you call fair.

**Mr. Marchese:** I would urge you to look at that; 250 bucks—

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** I would be more than happy—

**Mr. Marchese:** —seems expensive, especially if people without work are not getting the jobs out there that they're trying to get.

My last request: Could the ministry staff prepare us a complete list of all the grants the ministry has authorized in the past year, 2004-05—the grant recipients and an explanation of the grants?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** That's for our settlement services?

**Mr. Marchese:** For all the services that go out to your agencies.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** They're very limited.

**Mr. Marchese:** I'm assuming that you have that list somewhere.

**Ms. Andrew:** We would have to compile it: the Women's Directorate, the Seniors' Secretariat—

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** Do you want the others too?

**Ms. Andrew:** —the citizenship and immigration—

**Mr. Marchese:** No, I don't think I'm interested in the Women's Directorate.

**Ms. Andrew:** Just immigration-related?

**Mr. Marchese:** That's right.

**Ms. Andrew:** Yes; we can provide that.

**Mr. Marchese:** Wonderful. In due course, as you can. Thank you very much, Minister, Deputy and others.

**The Vice-Chair:** Any further questions from members of the committee? Seeing none, Minister, respectfully, I would offer you the opportunity to summarize very briefly. After that, we will end up calling the question on the votes.

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** I just want to say that I think you have to agree it has been a valuable exchange of comments and ideas by all parties. It's been a very substantive exercise for me as a new minister, and I appreciate your patience and your time, and staff for being helpful. That's really all I have to say: Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair:** With that, members are prepared to entertain the questions. Shall vote 601 carry? All those in support? Opposed? That's carried.

Shall vote 602 carry? That's carried.

Shall vote 603 carry? That's carried.

Shall vote 604 carry? That's carried.

Shall vote 605 carry? That's carried.

Shall the estimates of the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration carry? That carries.

Shall I report the estimates of the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration to the House? That motion carries.

Thank you, members. We're adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock, room 228; take note.

*The committee adjourned at 1557.*

## CONTENTS

Wednesday 5 October 2005

<b>Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration</b> .....	E-695
Hon. Mike Colle, minister	
Ms. Joan Andrew, deputy minister	
Ms. Katherine Hewson, acting assistant deputy minister, citizenship and immigration division	
<b>Ontario Women's Directorate</b> .....	E-725
Hon. Sandra Pupatello, minister responsible for women's issues	
Ms. Susan Seaby, executive director	

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