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**Official Report  
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(Hansard)**

**Tuesday 22 January 2008**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Mardi 22 janvier 2008**

**Standing committee on  
finance and economic affairs**

Pre-budget consultations

**Comité permanent des finances  
et des affaires économiques**

Consultations prébudgétaires

Chair: Pat Hoy  
Clerk: William Short

Président : Pat Hoy  
Greffier : William Short

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Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services  
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building  
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111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

## COMITÉ PERMANENT DES FINANCES ET DES AFFAIRES ÉCONOMIQUES

Tuesday 22 January 2008

Mardi 22 janvier 2008

*The committee met at 0902 in the Water Tower Inn, Sault Ste. Marie.*

### PRE-BUDGET CONSULTATIONS

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** The standing committee on finance and economic affairs will now come to order. We're pleased to be in Sault Ste. Marie this morning.

### UNITED WAY OF SAULT STE. MARIE

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** Our first presentation is from the United Way of Sault Ste. Marie, if you would come forward, please; anywhere along there will be fine. You have 10 minutes for your presentation. There may be up to five minutes of questioning following that. I would ask you to identify yourself for the purposes of our recording Hansard, and then you can begin.

**Mr. Gary Vipond:** Thank you. My name is Gary Vipond. I'm with the United Way of Sault Ste. Marie.

Good morning, Mr. Chair and committee members. The subject of my presentation today is a province-wide 211 service for Ontario and supports for low-income citizens.

Families and individuals facing distress often don't know where to turn to obtain the tools they need to solve their problems. There are 80,000 community services and programs available to residents of Ontario; however, information about how to access these services is unequally provided. For individuals facing a personal or family crisis, or merely looking for information about community amenities, where to look is the biggest obstacle in finding available services.

Work recently conducted in northern Ontario through the Community Matters project, which received provincial funding through the Ontario Trillium Foundation, and the Sault Ste. Marie updated community plan on homelessness have identified communication and co-ordination of services to be priorities in this region. Larger distances between major centres and distribution of resources are particular challenges in the north.

The 211 telephone number is assigned by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission for a public information and referral service to provide Canadians with coordinated access to community, social and health resources. Like 911, 211 is an easy-to-remember telephone number that connects people

to the services they need. Unlike 911, 211 connects to a full range of non-emergency social, health, community and government services. By calling 211, an individual would immediately reach a certified information specialist trained to assess their needs, to understand their questions and concerns, and to link them to the best available information and services, all on a free, confidential, multilingual basis.

The 211 project integrates telephone and Internet to achieve fast, effective and consistent access to service 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and reduces non-emergency calls to 911, freeing up emergency response capacity to do its job. It increases the effectiveness of community safety and public health strategies by creating an additional channel to distribute information. It helps newcomers integrate into their new communities. It facilitates volunteering by reducing the effort to find agencies compatible with volunteer skills. It creates a tracking system that aids service planning for improving the use of existing resources.

All told, the cost-benefit ratio of 211 is 2.4 to 1, meaning investments are returned in under three years, according to Deloitte Financial Advisory.

Now, 211 could be a powerful component in a province-wide poverty reduction strategy by facilitating access to service for low-income Ontarians. A number of online training and employment resources are already linked to 211 websites. Access to information and the connectivity it facilitates helps sustain the health and prosperity of individuals and communities, and supports institutions created to address human needs. Improving access to information about community resources empowers individuals and helps them to cope with a wide variety of life challenges. Promoting individual resilience and community engagement enables people to better sustain themselves and their families.

A 211 service is currently available in Toronto, Simcoe county, Niagara region, Halton region, and Windsor and Essex county. Currently, 3.5 million Ontario residents, or 28% of the provincial population, have access to 211 service. By May 2008, the number of Ontario residents with access to 211 services will increase to 6.2 million, or 50%, through the addition of 211 call centres in Ottawa, Thunder Bay and Peel region.

Thunder Bay has taken the lead in developing the 211 information centre for northern Ontario through the Lakehead Social Planning Council and the United Way

of Thunder Bay, while Sudbury, with the United Way of Greater Sudbury and the Social Planning Council of Sudbury, and Sault Ste. Marie, through the United Way of Sault Ste. Marie, are focusing on ensuring the readiness and availability of local data to support 211. The eight local sites will be transformed into a seamless, province-wide system in two phases.

In the first phase, the local sites will reach out to their surrounding regions—and, in the case of Ottawa, to all francophones—as resourcing becomes available. Thunder Bay will provide outreach to aboriginal communities. Once the regional operations meet the standards required to deliver a consistent customer experience, the second phase will integrate the regional operations into one virtual call centre. A non-profit corporation has been formed to coordinate 211 development in Ontario.

In 2005, provincial government leadership for 211 was transferred to the Ministry of Community and Social Services from the Ministry of Consumer and Business Services. The 2006-07 budget included two start-up investments in 211: \$1.4 million for one year from the Ministry of Community and Social Services to expand 211 telephone service system planning and to establish provincial governance, and \$3 million over three years from the Ministry of Finance to expand data collection capability, strengthen French-language capacity, and deploy 211 Internet service province-wide.

The province, through the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, has been involved with Toronto's 211 service and the 211ontario.ca initiative, and is partnered to implement a number of online training and employment resources. The Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services has partnered to implement the Directory of Youth Justice Services in Ontario. The province has also helped fund the Ontario Aboriginal Calendar and the Directory of Aboriginal Service Organizations. In May 2007, the Ministry of Community and Social Services indicated it had reached the limit of its ability to provide 211 with interministerial leadership.

The Ontario government support and investment in 211 service has helped advance the initiative. We greatly appreciate the government's support to date. However, the scope and duration of the government's support are uncertain. A fully costed plan prepared by Deloitte in 2007 concluded that the mature annual cost of a province-wide 211 service system would be \$15 million. Deloitte recommended that the cost of 211 be shared as follows: 60% provincial, 20% municipal, 10% federal, and 10% United Way and other funders. United Ways across Ontario have supported 211 services for some time. A number of municipalities have stepped forward to help launch sites in their own communities. In northern Ontario, provincial investments for this project have leveraged funds from the federal government and the private sector.

#### 0910

United Way requests the ongoing involvement of the Ontario government in the further development of 211 by

allocating \$24.5 million over four years, starting in 2008-09, to complete 211 implementation province-wide and help sustain Ontario's 211 system. A checkerboard pattern of access to 211 services means that many Ontarians, not just in rural and remote areas, will be unable to find out about needed services in a timely fashion.

I would also like to touch briefly on the subject of supports for low-income citizens. The Ontario government invested \$10 million in the rent bank in 2004, as well as \$4 million in 2006 and \$4.8 million in 2007. These funds have been critical in assisting low-income citizens in maintaining their residence when faced with eviction. The emergency energy fund and consolidated homelessness prevention program are two other Ontario government programs which have also been critical in reducing poverty by assisting low-income earners in maintaining their residences.

In Sault Ste. Marie, the United Way community assistance trust program was established in 2001 to provide assistance or referral for individuals or families that are facing emergency or extraordinary circumstances. This program relies on funding sources such as the rent bank, emergency energy and the consolidated homelessness prevention program in order to assist those in need. The program also receives funding from United Way, the federal government and Ontario Works.

United Way requests that the Ontario government continue to support the rent bank, emergency energy and the consolidated homelessness program at least at the 2007 levels and consider increasing funding to these areas to further reduce the impact of poverty in the province.

I'd like to thank you for providing me the opportunity to address your committee this morning.

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** Thank you for the submission. In this rotation, the questioning will go to the official opposition.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Thank you, Mr. Vipond, for your presentation on behalf of the United Way. I find the 211 concept really quite interesting, and I can think of other areas in Ontario that have used it. Is it working out okay in the Soo as far as—are all agencies, all groups, part of this? Are they willing to accept the referrals and have their information on the system?

**Mr. Gary Vipond:** We are just at the stages of data collection in Sault Ste. Marie at this point, but we are getting good co-operation from agencies. In fact, we have a number of agencies that have pulled together and formed a collaborative to gather the data, a number of agencies that already have some databases in place, so that we're working together to reduce the cost and to streamline the operation. We're pulling our community data into one database, and that data is exported to Thunder Bay to be part of the telephone system and also to Toronto to be part of the Internet system.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Just on the other topic of the rent bank, I see that the Ontario government has cut funding from \$10 million in 2004 to somewhere around \$4.8 million now. Is there any reason why they have done that that you know? You also made mention of the energy

fund and homelessness prevention. Have those funds been cut as well, or increased? Do you have any idea?

**Mr. Gary Vipond:** I believe the initial idea behind the rent bank was that money would be put into a fund, people would borrow it when they were in trouble, and they would pay it back when they were able to. I know that, locally, it's very difficult for people to pay that money back because when they're in arrears for their rent and they need some assistance, they're really behind the eight ball, and they don't seem to pull out of it very quickly, or sometimes ever. I can't speak for the government, obviously, but I believe the intent was that the money would be put in and it would keep regenerating itself. When that wasn't happening in all centres, my understanding is that additional monies were put in. I don't believe that monies were cut from it; I think that they've just been topping up the fund. But I really can't speak to that. That's my understanding.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** What's the time, Chair?

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** Two minutes.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Okay, super.

Mr. Vipond, thanks very much for the presentation. I think Mr. Barrett had some good questions about the rent bank. I'll submit a research request and then it would be interesting to see how much principal is remaining and if payback has been working out, or Mr. Vipond's concerns if that's not happening. But I'll do that in writing to make sure it's clear.

With respect to the 211, you've had a number of ministries that have supported the initiative in different ways. It seems like COMSOC, community and social services, has been the lead ministry, if I glean that from the presentation.

**Mr. Gary Vipond:** Yes.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I have two questions. Is COMSOC the ministry you'd prefer to see continue to lead this process? And with respect to the ongoing provincial funding role, is that permanent, ongoing funding, or will 211 eventually be funded solely at a municipal level through other means?

**Mr. Gary Vipond:** I think COMSOC is a good ministry to be involved with 211 simply because of the nature of its being. It deals with social services, it deals with a number of funding sources that support people who are in need, so I think it is a good fit.

With respect to the ongoing funding, when Deloitte did their study, they determined that because of the nature of the service provided by 211, they felt that the cost should be shared by the provincial government, the federal government, municipal governments, private funders and the United Way. I had listed in my presentation the breakdown. So I would suggest that there would be an ongoing requirement for some kind of funding.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** From the provincial level, ongoing operating funding as opposed to—

**Mr. Gary Vipond:** Yes, based on the Deloitte study.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** The challenge I always see when you have four levels of government, four entities, that are relied upon for various funding shares—too often,

nothing will get done because each level will point at another level of government and say, "We're waiting for their funding first." But I appreciate the point, particularly when you're starting a system up. I come from Niagara, as you mentioned, one of the sites that currently benefits from 211. Do you anticipate that the federal government, which Deloitte recommended at 10%, is interested in funding 211 on an ongoing basis?

**Mr. Gary Vipond:** I know there is national work going on through United Way Centraide Canada. I'm not sure where they're at with that work, but I know it would be in their court to bring the federal government on board with 211. And 211 is not just in Ontario; 211 is up and running in Calgary and Edmonton; British Columbia is moving ahead very quickly; and there's also some good activity in Quebec. So I think that as this rolls out, the federal government will see the value in it. When you look at Hurricane Katrina when it hit the southern United States, the 911 system completely crashed and the 211 system was the one that actually got people through that crisis.

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** Thank you for your presentation.

#### PIC RIVER FIRST NATION

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** I call on the Pic River First Nation to come forward, please. Good morning. You have 10 minutes for your presentation. There may be five minutes of questioning. I would ask you to identify yourself for the purposes of our recording Hansard. You can begin.

**Ms. Cindy Fisher:** Good morning. My name is Cindy Fisher. I'm the education director with the Pic River First Nation. I'm grateful for this opportunity to address you this morning.

I'm in desperate need of your voice. I speak not only on behalf of my First Nation but I'm asking for your help on behalf of all aboriginal children. I have been involved with education at the First Nation level for the past 30 years, and, needless to say, I've been very, very patient. I've tried time and time again to have Indian and Northern Affairs Canada address the funding shortfalls in aboriginal education. I realize this is a provincial hearing, and if I am unable to connect the dots as to how all of this will affect the province, I sincerely hope that with your vision, you will be able to see the impact.

At this point, all I know is that I need to do everything in my power to make life better for our children. It has been said that we are in the rainbow time, and that this rainbow will be the bridge on which we will travel from the old into the new ways, and if just one colour is missing, then the bridge will not be complete and will not be strong enough to carry us. We are all interconnected. The stronger our people become, the stronger Ontario will be and ultimately the stronger Canada will become.

#### 0920

My first concern is with the underfunding of First Nations education. At our school, Pic River Elementary,

we receive \$5,000 per student from INAC through the nominal roll process. If we transferred that very same student to a school in Marathon, which is about 15 minutes away, INAC would provide Pic River with \$12,000 for tuition fees. There was a time when we had five IPRC students—that's identification of special ed students—attending our school. We received \$86,000 to provide special education services for them as well as total special education for all of our school. When these same students left to attend high school in town, INAC provided anywhere from \$23,000 to \$27,000 per student to cover programming costs. I bring this forward so that you will hear first-hand how INAC practises systemic racism.

Now, with the money First Nations currently receive for special education, we must cover all special education costs at both the provincial and federal levels, and it's just not possible. Native people have the highest rate of alcoholism; it only stands to reason that we will have the highest rate of fetal alcohol effects. This has a direct impact on your budget when students with high needs move off the reserve and become the responsibility of the province. The demands on your special education programming will definitely increase. We need investments in prevention programs and curriculum development to begin to stop this cycle.

Every year, among the many reports First Nations must fill out, we have submitted a provincial territorial report. This report tells INAC who we have tuition agreements with and how much we spend on tuition. The report is very detailed and includes copies of all invoices and payments. INAC came up with the calculation that the number of students we have on our nominal roll times the amount of tuition being charged would equal our provincial education budget of \$312,000. It sounds reasonable—that portion of the report was exact—but INAC did not include the adjustment billings, cost for extra-curricular activities or the aboriginal language program. Our total tuition bills for this report exceeded \$500,000. This is currently being reviewed, and we expect a funding adjustment to offset this deficit. My concern here is for First Nations who do not have the knowledge or the personnel to address situations like this. Have they received adequate dollars for the payment of their tuition bills?

On average our teachers receive a salary that is 30% lower than their provincial counterparts. We do not have the dollars to provide the same professional development or program implementation as the Ministry of Education. First Nations did not receive any dollars for literacy, numeracy or character education; second-level services are non-existent. Currently the teachers with NOEL, Northern Ontario Education Leaders, are involved with an oral language project and are being trained by the world's best in oral language.

The gap between aboriginal and non-aboriginal students in the boards is decreasing. Mount Carmel, a school in Keewatin-Patricia District School Board with a 95% aboriginal student population, recently achieved a

high of 92% to a low of 85% in province-wide testing. It is clear that, with investments and programming, aboriginal kids can succeed with the provincial curriculum. Ontario, with the establishment of the aboriginal unit within the Ministry of Education, has made great strides in beginning to address the void in aboriginal education—the work done to date with the aboriginal self-ID program, curriculum that is aboriginal-inclusive across the board, as opposed to being a separate stand-alone subject.

Then there is our beautiful language. Ontario must invest in aboriginal languages with the same resourcing provided to the French-language program. It must be scheduled during the school day at a time that will not conflict with math, English or science studies. Although it is not an education responsibility to keep our language alive, for some students this may be the only exposure they will have to our language. The Lakehead District School Board is having great success with a French-language acquisition program. Please look at this so that it can be applied to the successful delivery of aboriginal language programming.

Aboriginal post-secondary institutions receive one fifth of the amount provided to non-aboriginal institutions. Aboriginal post-secondary institutions are instrumental in providing programs that address and meet First Nations needs. Excellent examples of this are the water treatment certification program and the public administration programs with the First Nations Technical Institute, or the early childhood education program with the Anishinabek Education Institute, or the aboriginal teacher program with Seven Generations Education Institute. These are just programs we have accessed and used as part of our capacity-building strategy. The programs offered by these institutes are many and varied. The doors to these institutes need to be kept open, as there will be a time when First Nations will be in a position to take full advantage of what they have to offer.

I realize that this may not be the place to bring forth these issues, but I need to get the message out to everyone possible. I need you to help me to tell Canada that enough is enough, to get real, and that we cannot allow the lives of our children and our grandchildren to be wasted away. Meegwetch.

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** Thank you for your presentation. We'll move to the NDP in this rotation.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Thank you for a very powerful presentation.

I'm curious about this program, because this is wonderful news, that Mount Carmel, a school in Keewatin-Patricia District School Board with a 95% aboriginal student population, recently achieved a high of 92%. What happened there?

**Ms. Cindy Fisher:** Keewatin-Patricia was one of the first school boards, or the very first—I'm sorry. It's not Keewatin-Patricia; it's Keewatin-Patricia and the Kenora Catholic District School Board. They were the first ones to do the aboriginal self-ID project, and as a result of that, they were able to identify and shift the focus as to

how they would implement programming in their boards. They did early literacy; they had success teams. They just did an extraordinary amount of programming to address First Nations children and the deficiencies. When they were coming into the schools, there may have been a deficit in their reading, so they would address that. Dr. Allan Craig would be the one who knows all about it; he has that information.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Okay. You have been harsh, and I think deservedly so, on INAC. I think INAC has failed First Nations in many places. There is ongoing discussion, and many people are starting to come to the opinion that it would be better for the province and for the First Nations communities to take over the education themselves; that is, to run your own school board, to get away from INAC and to give the same kind of education that other Ontario students get. Has any thought been given in the Pic River First Nation about this?

**Ms. Cindy Fisher:** Yes. We're part of the Union of Ontario Indians/Anishinabek Nation process to do the restoration of jurisdiction with regard to delivering education programs. It's been a long—I think it's 2010 now that we're looking for an implementation date. I agree that, yes, we do need something in place that is going to govern, very much like the school boards operate right now.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** You have correctly identified that at this point it's mostly a federal responsibility. Where would you like the province to head? Would you like us to head towards having education delivered by the province, working with the First Nations communities to develop First Nations school boards and that kind of thing, or do you think that we should keep hands off? I just need to know, not so much today, but over the next four years, in this Parliament, what we should be doing.

**Ms. Cindy Fisher:** I believe that would be a good direction to work toward. I remember a while back, because I have been here 30 years, the tripartite with the welfare. That was one thing, and then, as a result of that, the rules that had to be followed, because right now there are no rules for First Nations. First Nations do not have rules that they have to—I don't know how to say it; "rules" is the only thing I can think of. Right now in Pic River we follow the provincial curriculum, but there's nothing saying you have to follow the provincial curriculum. There's nothing saying that you have to have 195 teaching days. Those are the things that we adopt on our own in Pic River. And, yes, it would be good and I think it would make more accountability as far as delivering education programs.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Thank you very much.

0930

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** And thank you for your presentation.

Our next presenter is Pic River First Nation. If you would come forward, please. Good morning. You have up to 10 minutes for your presentation, and there could be five minutes of questioning. I would ask you to

identify yourselves for the purposes of our recording Hansard. You can begin.

**Chief Arthur Fisher:** Okay. I can go first. My name is Arthur Fisher. I'm the chief of the Ojibways of Pic River First Nation. I welcome this opportunity to speak to you. I fully understand that this is a provincial venue and that aboriginal affairs are primarily a federal responsibility. However, there are many issues that occur as a result of the inadequacies from Canada which directly affect the economy of Ontario.

I applaud the establishment of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and wish to acknowledge the appointment of Michael Bryant as minister. His knowledge and experience will prove beneficial as we partner to address First Nation concerns in Ontario. The one thing that I ask in this respect is that the government of Ontario keep this minister in place, as it has been my experience that as soon as we begin to make progress in aboriginal affairs, the governments, both federal and provincial, change ministers and we have to start all over again.

I have been involved with First Nation politics and have served on council for the past 40 years. I have witnessed many changes in our community. There has been much growth. There are times when I look around and I find it difficult to believe that it has only been one generation since we lived in extreme poverty. It is because of this that I believe it is possible for all Anishinabek to live a good life. We must not look at governments from a dependency point of view, and governments must not look at financial support as a handout. It is a responsibility.

In a visit to Pic River, Elijah Harper talked of how Canada—and, I need to add, Ontario as well—must spend the taxpayers' dollars on the taxpayers. Do not spend their money on us; all we need is 3% of the natural resources and we will succeed. This is really ironic, since at one time we owned 100% of Canada's natural resources.

Pic River First Nation is located on the north shore of Lake Superior, 400 kilometres north of Sault Ste. Marie. I believe it is a very progressive community in all areas. This does not mean that we have not faced the same obstacles as all other First Nations in Canada. The difference is that we have done something about it. The education of our people has always been protected. When INAC wanted to move our children to Marathon to be educated, our parents refused—and that's when I was a child. When alcohol and drug addictions threatened to take over our lives, our people sobered up and the healing process began. It has not been an easy road, and because of intergenerational effects, it will be one that we will need to travel down again. Even though we have accomplished all of this, we have been restricted in reaching our full potential primarily because of inadequate funding and lack of resources.

We need Ontario to add its voice to demand that Canada begin to resource First Nations at a level that will result in success. First Nations cannot move forward because we are ridiculously underfunded. Realistically,

would Ontario expect municipalities to service their communities without providing adequate dollars to provide policing and fire protection and to implement building codes, road maintenance, water and sanitation? It's unthinkable. First Nations are not resourced to provide proper infrastructure, our administration building is inadequate, and our children do not have access to a proper gymnasium. As our community grows, the need for a sewage treatment plant is becoming a necessity.

The funding caps placed on us by the federal government back in the 1970s seriously hinders our capacity building in all areas. In education, we cannot begin to keep pace with the province. Our children's education is valued at one third of what the province provides for their children. Insufficient funding restricts us from capitalizing on the economic opportunities that will lead our First Nation into self-sufficiency in the areas of forestry, mining and hydro development. One key area that Ontario can help in partnership with us is the development of training programs that will provide a skilled labour force.

Pic River has used its own source revenue to subsidize funding by the federal government for health, education, social services, housing and water. These dollars were not intended to provide essential services. We intended to use these dollars to invest in partnerships that would provide another source of revenue for our First Nation.

Canada has not lived up to the intent of the treaty process. We need Ontario to put the pressure on Canada to provide the financial resources needed for First Nations. Without it, Ontario will ultimately pay the price in a negative way, with aboriginal people burdening the welfare system, the health system and the judicial system. We need the support of Ontario to realize self-sufficiency. With that, I thank you very much.

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** Thank you. This round of questioning will go to the government.

**Mr. David Oraziotti:** First of all, I want to welcome the committee to the riding of Sault Ste. Marie. It's great to see everybody here today, so thanks for taking the time to come here. I also want to thank the presenters for taking the time to come here and give their presentations.

First of all, Chief, thanks for being here. I want to say to you that our government hears you loud and clear when it comes to issues in First Nations. We did, as you know, call an inquiry into the death of Dudley George and, following some of those recommendations, acted on them and created, for the first time in Ontario, the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs to give aboriginal issues the level of consideration and discussion that they certainly deserve in this province. I know that you're well aware that Minister Michael Bryant has been very active in meeting with many First Nations organizations right across the province with the commitment to expedite as best possible, where able from the Ontario perspective, outstanding treaty issues. Hopefully, that will be a significant step toward supporting self-governance and improving the quality of life for all First Nations right across Ontario.

I appreciate Ms. Fisher's comments as well with respect to education. Having worked in education for 10 years as a teacher here locally, I can tell you that the programming and the support for aboriginal students in First Nations that are offered in the local school boards have continued to increase. I think you're probably aware of that.

Your challenge, as you have fairly clearly articulated today, and our challenge as a province as well, is to impress upon the federal government the importance of funding First Nations at a level that will continue to improve the quality of life of First Nations and address some of the basic issues, such as health and education. I see that Chief Sayers is here from Batchewana. I know that we'll be talking about family health teams. I'm sure health issues as well as education are probably top of mind in your community.

If you could articulate for me perhaps some of the ways that we could move forward provincially in support of First Nations, whether it be on economic issues, education, health care, or any other areas that you think would be helpful and beneficial to all First Nations right across the province—could you identify a couple of specific initiatives that you think the provincial government should be undertaking to support First Nations?

**0940**

**Chief Arthur Fisher:** Okay. I think with the new Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, in conjunction with other ministries like natural resources and mining, there should be some programs out there to fund First Nations to have the capacity to go into partnerships in forestry, in developing hydro sites, to go in partnership with mines and even go in for impact benefit agreements, those kinds of things. At the moment, I think most First Nations are not as fortunate as Pic River because they are greatly underfunded and they cannot get off the ground because of lack of funding. They have to provide services with the money they get, and even that's lacking, so they practically have no money to do anything. That's what I find. Both governments have to look at sending money in there to have partnerships set up where they can put in their share of money, providing resource revenue-sharing that First Nations could use on their behalf in the future. Pic River did some of that on our own. When I was a councillor, we were fed up with being dependent on government, so we said, "Let's be self-sufficient. Why can't we aim for that?" So we started strategizing. But it was difficult because resources were so few; we had to fiddle around with the resources.

We risked a lot of things, but sure enough it did work. We've got three hydro projects online now, which is fortunate for us, because we pursued them. We're in the process of working with a mining company to go into partnership—and there are two more hydro sites that we're going to develop ourselves because now we have the capacity of being able to go to the banks and say, "Hey, we'd like to develop." We use the previous dams we have as equity, so we can go and borrow against those. We're thinking of having resource revenue-sharing

with the mining company. There are some windmill power companies coming up; we're already talking with them about partnerships. As a matter of fact, Brookfield is one of the key players in the area, and we're talking to them quite favourably and things are going pretty strongly.

But that's only one First Nation. I'd like to see every First Nation in Ontario develop something like that. There's great opportunity in northern Ontario for that, because the resources are on tap there. The government is going to have to start looking at sharing resources with First Nations and taking care of things, setting up partnerships so they can derive money from resources. We're saying "3% of revenue." If we can get something like that, we'd probably be self-sufficient and could even grow to greater capacities once we start up something like this.

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** Gentlemen, I didn't realize that you were sharing your time. You had three minutes left, so I apologize for that. I assume that you're Robert Starr seated there. If you want to read yours into the record, that would be fine. There won't be any questions, though.

**Mr. Robert Starr:** Mine is just a statement for consideration.

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** Go ahead. I apologize.

**Mr. Robert Starr:** Good morning and thank you for the opportunity to hear my short, short sentences.

First Nations in northern Ontario are placed in a delicate situation that if played correctly can open up endless amounts of opportunity for economic growth and participation. The landmark court decisions known as Haida, Taku River, and KI have made "reasonable and meaningful consultation" a household term for many First Nation communities. They have opened the door for many First Nations to become active stakeholders in resource developments on their traditional areas.

Recently the provincial government imposed a tax on the diamond developments with regard to the mine starting up currently in the Attawapiskat area. This has had as much effect on the mining industry as did the KI decision. The search for additional and new resources has been impeded by this. This tax grab is opportunistic and will only slow down the search for precious metal and stone opportunities in the north.

There have been reports in the media lately of the costs to the provincial government with regard to the illegal tobacco trade on First Nations. While I do not invalidate the issue, my concern lies with the fact that for there to be lost taxation, there have to be people who are taxpayers not paying the tax. This means that the sales cannot be accredited to First Nation members making the purchases. I am concerned that the provincial government will create a new taxation policy to capture that lost revenue.

My concern with this year's budget, which is already estimated to be in a surplus position and which also goes against the McGuinty government's policy of a balanced budget, is that there will be changes to taxation policy,

changes that will have damaging effects on (a) the ability to create opportunities in resource development for First Nations to benefit from, and (b) a taxation loophole that has allowed on-reserve businesses to flourish due to an increased demand for small-market cigarette companies.

I truly hope that we—and I speak not only as a member of a First Nation in Ontario but also as a tax-paying citizen of Ontario—can change current and proposed taxation policies so that First Nations can create economies of their own in an effort to become self-sustaining nations.

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** Thank you both for your presentation this morning.

#### ONTARIO NATIVE EDUCATION COUNSELLING ASSOCIATION

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** For the committee, our 9:45 is not here yet but the people scheduled for 10:45, the Ontario Native Education Counselling Association, have stated that they would come forward now. Thank you very much for being early and willing to come forward to the committee. You have 10 minutes for your presentation. There may be five minutes of questioning following that. I would ask you to identify yourself for the purposes of our recording Hansard. You can begin.

**Ms. Roxane Maniwabi:** Thank you very much. My name is Roxane Maniwabi. I'm the executive director of the Ontario Native Education Counselling Association.

The Ontario Native Education Counselling Association is a non-profit organization that was incorporated in 1985 to meet the needs of native education counsellors by providing and developing culturally relevant curriculum, training and professional development. Our organization services approximately 134 First Nation communities, as well as other elementary, secondary and post-secondary counsellors in the province of Ontario. In partnership with INAC and the Ontario Ministry of Education, ONECA has successfully been training native education counsellors since 1977.

Native education counsellors play an integral role in student success and are an essential service to First Nation communities, First Nation schools and provincial schools. As counsellors providing this service to our students, it's evident that First Nation education is under-supported, under-resourced and needs equitable funding in order to improve First Nation student graduation attainment at all levels.

In order for us to deliver the level of service required by students, First Nations require equitable funds to meet the educational, social, demographic, economic, cultural and pedagogical needs of First Nation schools.

As First Nation counsellors on the front line, we see first-hand the impacts that insufficient funding has on our schools, students and communities. The current band-operated funding formula needs to be reviewed and significant changes need to be made on how funding is determined, managed and distributed to First Nations so that each First Nation receives equitable funding to

support the educational requirements of their schools and students.

Native education counsellors are very discouraged by the graduation attainment levels, the education gap between aboriginal and non-aboriginal students, the number of students who are on waiting lists for post-secondary, the poverty rates, suicide rates, incarceration rates and unemployment rates of our youth. Given the labour shortage and the increasing population of aboriginal youth, Ontario cannot afford to turn a blind eye to the barriers that inhibit the growth and development of aboriginal youth. According to Statistics Canada 2001 figures, 976,305 people identified themselves as aboriginal. Approximately 20% or 188,315 of that population resides in the province of Ontario, 40,490 on-reserve and 147,820 off-reserve. Those are pretty high statistics.

The aboriginal population has the highest birth rate in Canada, and more than half of the aboriginal population is under the age of 25. We can clearly see the economic benefit to the province if aboriginals increase their education attainment levels and enter into the workforce. An increase in the educational attainment of aboriginal Canadians would have a significant and effective impact on productivity and growth, create a larger pool of university graduates, build leadership capacity and ultimately have a substantial impact on the Canadian economy through output and productivity.

**0950**

It's in the best interests of Ontario as a whole that equitable funding is available to support First Nation education so that aboriginal students can reach the attainment levels so that they can succeed and be competitive in the labour market.

The Ontario Native Education Counselling Association recommends that the government of Ontario:

- insist that changes be made to the band-operated funding formula to include equitable funding, allowing First Nation schools to meet the provincial and federal curriculum requirements;

- insist that the band-operated funding formula factor in all of the support services delivered by First Nation education departments;

- insist that the formula be indexed to reflect the cost of living and that it should be reviewed annually;

- insist that the amount of funds available for special education is increased to reflect the number of students and their needs;

- insist that the federal government remove the 2% cap that has been placed on post-secondary funding so that we can reduce the number of post-secondary applicants on the waiting list and increase the number of post-secondary students in our institutions. Increasing the number of professionals will have a positive impact on the social and economic advancement of aboriginal people;

- and continue to create partnerships that promote and improve student outcomes from kindergarten through post-secondary.

Investing in First Nations is by far the most beneficial investment that the government of Canada can make. Increasing the number of aboriginal high school graduates will have significant and far-reaching economic benefits to Canada and will contribute to improving the personal well-being of aboriginal Canadians. Investing in education will also contribute to somewhat alleviating two of the most pressing challenges facing the Canadian economy, and that is slower growth in the labour force and lacklustre labour productivity growth.

The return on investing in education is not solely private, but societal, as increased educational attainment generally reduces crime, improves health and potentially breaks the cycle of poverty.

Given the proper resources and equitable funding, First Nation counsellors can be very effective and have a positive impact on the educational attainment levels of aboriginal students because they are often the front-line common link between school, family and community. Therefore, we would encourage the province of Ontario to act on behalf of all First Nations and ensure that the government of Canada meets their obligation to First Nation education.

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** That concludes your presentation?

**Ms. Roxane Manitowabi:** That concludes my presentation.

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** Okay, thank you.

**Ms. Roxane Manitowabi:** At the back of the presentation I have included our concerns and facts and impacts. Statistics was never one of my strong points, but if you look at the statistics, you can get an overall picture of how aboriginal people can contribute to the economy and the impacts of ignoring education, because education is the foundation to success.

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** Thank you. This round of questioning goes to the official opposition.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Thank you very much for coming today and making your presentation. I found it very enlightening, very interesting, very positive and very constructive. I want to wish you well in your responsibilities. I think it's so important. I think the challenges our First Nation communities are facing over the long term will be addressed by improvements to education. Certainly that's going to be a big part of whatever solutions come forward in the coming generations, so thank you very much for the work that you're doing.

I just wanted to ask a question of clarification. The band-operated funding formula that you reference: All of that money, I assume, comes from the federal government. Is that correct?

**Ms. Roxane Manitowabi:** That's correct.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** And it's based on the provincial level of funding in 1996?

**Ms. Roxane Manitowabi:** The band-operated funding formula has not been indexed or reviewed since 1996. As a result, the cost of living has gone up, tuition rates have gone up. I think we're 30% behind.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I would think that, yes, that would be a conservative figure.

**Ms. Roxane Maniwabi:** And when we look at the band-operated funding formula for First Nations, there are a lot of services and considerations that are not considered under the funding formula, such as library services, extracurricular activities. So all of those things inhibit development of our children.

I look at the wonderful work that Mr. Bartleman did with the book project, and I commend him for all of the work that he's done. But in my mind, I say, why does he have to do that? Why do we not have books in our school? Why is he having to do this?

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** You're referring to the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario?

**Ms. Roxane Maniwabi:** Yes. Why can't we resource our libraries? Well, because we don't have the dollars to be able to do that.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** You mentioned that there is a huge waiting list for post-secondary education. Can you tell us a little bit more about that?

**Ms. Roxane Maniwabi:** In the latest study, done by the AFN, they identified 10,000 students sitting on a waiting list for post-secondary funding. There's been a cap on post-secondary funding dollars since 1996, so it restricts the number of students that can go on to post-secondary.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Thank you.

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** Mr. Hudak.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I have similar questions to my colleague Mr. Arnott's about university. A 2% funding cap: What does that mean exactly? In your point number 5, you're asking the province to call upon the federal government to remove the 2% cap that has been placed on post-secondary funding. Does that mean it's only allowed to grow 2% a year?

**Ms. Roxane Maniwabi:** They have had a 2% cap, so they haven't increased the number of allocations. There's been a cap; they can only increase it 2%.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** The number of people who will get scholarships? I'm not sure I understand what the cap—

**Ms. Roxane Maniwabi:** The overall funding.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Okay. So it grows at only 2% per year.

**Ms. Roxane Maniwabi:** At 2%.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** You also reference the role that the province is playing. You reference positively, in your supplemental piece, the Ontario Ministry of Education aboriginal education unit—some shared goals for 2016. It's always a challenge with the finance committee, because the federal government has obligations, and if people feel they're not living up to them, then they'll press the province, and the province has obligations. What role is the Ministry of Education specifically playing with respect to aboriginal education, and what more are you calling for, aside from lobbying the federal government?

**Ms. Roxane Maniwabi:** I have to commend the provincial ministry. The new aboriginal education unit

has developed some really strong relationships and put into place a very nice framework that does work at developing partnerships with First Nations and implementing training programs that will have a direct impact. Ontario has put \$13 million into this program to help organizations like ours.

I'll give you an example. We run the native counsellor training program, and we have a partnership between INAC and Ontario. We get partial funding from the Ontario ministry and partial funding from INAC, and the rest is all tuition-driven. So those kinds of partnerships are really important. With the program we run, we train counsellors, and most of the students in our program are employed and come to us for training. We're the stepping stone for higher learning. So those partnerships are integral. It's a good step in the right direction.

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** Thank you for your presentation.

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#### GARDEN RIVER FIRST NATION

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** I'm advised that our 10 o'clock, Garden River First Nation, is willing to come forward now. Good morning. You have 10 minutes for your presentation. There may be five minutes of questioning following that. I would ask you to identify yourself for the purposes of our recording Hansard. You may begin.

**Chief Lyle Sayers:** Good morning. My name is Chief Lyle Sayers, from the Garden River First Nation. I'm in my 10th consecutive year as chief now. I've been on council for over 20 years, consecutively since 1989. Over those years I've run into a lot of difficulties in terms of trying to maintain a government such as Garden River, and a lot of the shortfalls that we've encountered along the way have been enormous. This morning I'm going to be talking about a number of issues, but the first one has to do with health. I want to thank the committee for coming up to Garden River to hear us out. I'm not an expert in health, but our technicians have developed some questions for me to put to you, so I'll go ahead with that.

Among the commitments from your campaign platform, there are a number of areas that we think are first priorities that should be looked at in the budget for 2008. I'll list some of them.

(1) Oral health: Your government committed no less than \$45 million to provide oral health care to uninsured Ontarians. You must make good on this promise soon and ensure that dental care and oral health services are implemented through existing primary health care organizations that have the capacity, such as CHCs, AHACs and FHTs.

(2) Aboriginal health: Your government committed to reviewing the second-class funding that is provided to Ontario's 10 aboriginal health access centres—more than a \$15-million shortfall when compared to other, similar parts of the system. You must not only review the

second-class-citizen funding that AHACs receive but remedy the \$15-million AHAC shortfall so that AHAC patients are not treated as second-class citizens.

There are a lot of acronyms that I am using. They will be provided to you later on.

(3) Increasing access to health care: You must commit to increasing access to health care for Ontarians. This issue is very often misstated as access to physicians, but physicians are only one part of the problem and one part of the solution. You must increase access to primary health care, which means investing in CHCs, AHACs and FHTs, models of health care that value the contributions of all providers, including nurse practitioners, nurses, counsellors and others. We recommend that your government commit to no fewer than 20 new CHCs and AHACs per year over the next four years, beginning in 2008, and live up to your platform commitment of 50 new FHTs by 2009.

(4) Leadership from government: The government must not only exercise its funding muscle to increase access to health care, but should also demonstrate true leadership in shifting the debate away from the misinformed argument about doctor shortages alone to a debate that talks about the real solutions to our health care access challenges; namely, how to make the best use of all health care providers. This is especially important in the north.

(5) Planning health care for the future: One of the things that you didn't tell us in your platform but that we want to hear is how you are going to reach the primary health care needs of all Ontarians. By when will this happen, and what is your strategic plan for the right mix of models and health care providers to make this a reality? Within that, what is the strategy for the north, for francophones, for aboriginal communities? We actually want to see these strategic plans and hear what finances are going to be dedicated in 2008 to making them a reality.

What can the Ontario government do to continue to foster economic growth and job creation in the province? From the perspective of a local health organization, one of the best ways to enhance economic growth and productivity is to keep Ontarians healthy and to make our communities a place where people want to invest. That's what we mean by building the second stage of medicare. To do that, here are a few key priorities.

Eliminate the three-month OHIP waiting period for landed immigrants. The government is eliminating the three-month waiting period for OHIP coverage for military families. Why do you still impose this on new immigrants to Ontario? The Premier has said publicly, "When newcomers succeed, Ontario succeeds." The lack of health care coverage is tripping newcomer families across Ontario right from the starting gate. If you want economic productivity and growth, enable immigrants to remain free from crippling illnesses, free from tens of thousands of dollars of health care debt, and able to help build Ontario. Coincidentally, it costs Ontario taxpayers vastly more in lost productivity and hospital care than it

would to simply eliminate the three-month waiting period.

We need to ensure that all Ontarians have the basic income requirements to keep healthy and productive. Anything less than \$10 per hour as a minimum wage right now means that people are basically living below the poverty line and cannot afford even the food to keep healthy, according to government nutrition guidelines. Increase the minimum wage now.

Ensure that the Ministry of Finance plays a very active part in the recently created cabinet committee on poverty reduction. If it lives up to its mandate, this will be one of the best places to understand how all parts of government can connect to keep Ontarians healthy and productive.

Commit to preserving Ontario's universal, not-for-profit health care system. This is one of the leading reasons why companies choose to open offices or shops in Ontario and Canada.

Are there any programs or services the provincial government provides that are no longer needed?

There is a need overall for a shift in our thinking. If anything needs to go, it is the old way of thinking about and doing things. We are still talking about doctor shortages when we need to be talking about shortages of health care teams. We still talk about health care spending as the answer to health when we need to start talking about how to use existing resources better, as well as the impact of all government agencies on the health of our population.

The Ontario government has continued to call on the federal government to work on a manufacturing strategy and EI reform. Should Ontario continue to press its case for fairness for Ontario? If so, how?

We recommend continuing to press for a fair distribution of seats for Ontario in the reconfigured House of Commons.

We recommend continuing to press for increased federal support for municipalities across Ontario.

We recommend calling on the federal government to respect federal commitments made to aboriginal Canadians through the Kelowna accord.

We recommend calling on the federal government to uphold the commitment to fund and implement a public, universal child care program for Canadians.

We recommend pressing the federal government to develop minimum targets for general and child poverty reduction.

That, ladies and gentlemen, is my presentation on our health issues. Again, I'm not an expert on health, but if you have questions. I'll do my best to try to answer them.

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** Thank you, and this round of questioning will go to the NDP.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Thank you for your presentation.

I have a few questions about oral health. You started off with that. The government has committed to, I think, a relatively small oral health program in this Parliament. What is the state of oral health in First Nations communities? How many kids have access to dentists or go to dentists to repair their teeth? I'm not talking about

pulling them out. Is this common, that kids have this access?

**Chief Lyle Sayers:** More and more as time goes on, the commitments by the federal and provincial governments are less and less. Not a day goes by where somebody isn't calling me and saying—for example, I have an elder who has twice called me with regard to her eyes. For a simple test, it costs over \$100 that she now has to pay for. She's on a fixed income. I mean, 150 bucks goes a long way in their day-to-day lives, and that comes directly from their pocket to pay.

As for oral health, I can tell you I have children who have gone through the system. I ended up paying a lot in order for their teeth to be properly taken care of. The majority of our members probably don't have that care because they can't afford it. They can go and get their teeth checked or whatever, but when it comes to major work, there is a cost involved and it's not picked up fully by the Ontario or the federal government. So it is a struggle and it will continue to be unless something is done to correct it.

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**Mr. Michael Prue:** Is it common for First Nations children to lose their teeth, even at an early age?

**Chief Lyle Sayers:** Based on my personal views, within our territory we're doing fairly well in terms of providing for our children. But I can tell you that in a lot of communities up north, it's bad. The isolated communities, the communities where there's no access to some of these dentists etc.—it's terrible. People are suffering. When you've got toothaches or problems with your teeth, it affects everything; it's not just your tooth. It affects your thinking, it affects a lot of areas, including your whole system. I don't know what the percentage is, but a lot of the communities are struggling because of poor health care, including dentists, vision etc.

I can tell you that in our area—say, for example, Garden River—we're doing fairly well. We're a progressive community and are able to assist our members on occasions. But in remote communities and communities that are struggling, it's terrible.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** You talked about the second-class funding: \$15 million less than other systems would get. I wasn't quite clear on where that second-class funding is occurring.

**Chief Lyle Sayers:** That's one of the questions I hoped you wouldn't ask me, because—

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Then I'll ask you another one.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Michael Prue:** All right. You deviated from speaking about First Nations communities to speaking about immigrant communities and the three-month wait for OHIP. Is that a particular problem in your community or in this community?

**Chief Lyle Sayers:** Not in our communities, but when you look at the issue as a whole and where the monies are going to assist people, a lot of it is going towards new people coming in, or it should be, because when they do come in, a lot of their health issues are not resolved.

They're bringing them with them. When it costs more to put money in there, it'll save in the future in terms of where those monies are being—if you prevent the problem, there won't be a problem in the future. In a way, what we're saying is, put the money where it should go. Assist them so they have better health and we're not paying for their long-term wellness in the future. Stop the problem now, save the money; whereas five years down the road we have an immigrant who wasn't looked after when he first came, and that problem could get worse and cost the taxpayers a lot more money.

As to where you're putting the money, what we're saying is, prevent it now. Stop the sickness from happening when they get here and not five, six years down the road where it's costing more money to try to assist immigrants in terms of their health. They're like anybody else; they're not different. They need that help.

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** Thank you. You mentioned that you might provide some other information. If you do that, would you give it to the clerk, and then he'll make sure that everyone shares in that.

Am I correct to assume that one of you'll be making the next presentation? Okay. Then I'll just put it on the record here that the Garden River First Nation is making the next presentation. You've introduced yourselves already, so you would have another 10 minutes, the same format. Go ahead.

**Chief Lyle Sayers:** My next presentation deals with funding for our government. We're well aware that the federal government has the responsibility of First Nation communities, but we also know that we have a lot of agreements with the province, whether it's policing—there are tripartite agreements, health. So money has come from the province to fund certain areas of communities. With that, I'll read my report here.

We want to end our presentation by offering a few remarks on an issue that raises the notion of a government-to-government relationship, a relationship that is built upon the first law of the Anishinabek, and that is the law of respect.

Clearly, we understand that our principal relationship is with the federal crown; however, there are certain constitutional and legal responsibilities that are shared with the province of Ontario. For our people this relationship is set out in the Robinson-Huron treaty of 1850. In fact, it was our leader Chief Shingwauk who led to the negotiations and signing of this historic treaty.

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada offers band support funding to meet the cost of the administration of First Nation governments as we discharge our responsibilities under a legislative regime in the area of governance. Band support funding is intended to assist in administering and managing our local governments. Funding received from the federal government is of a modest amount, to the point of insufficient and inadequate. In fact, the amounts that have been allocated to First Nation governments have remained relatively the same for years. As a result of old and outdated formulas, our governments continue to bear the burden of cutting off services that are needed by our citizens.

The inequities place many of our communities in financial peril; that is, in order to provide needed services to our citizens, we fall into deficit. For example, funding for funerals and burials has remained the same for years, yet the cost of burial rites has increased. Other areas that band support funding supports are basic overhead, professional fees, employee office costs and major infrastructure services.

The formula that drives these services is based on our registered membership or the determination of our citizenship. In the most recent census taken by Canada, they have grossly misrepresented our demographics. While we have been penalized in the past for our membership numbers not reconciling with INAC, this will continue to occur since there is no motivation for us to participate, given that our reporting on who our citizens are is not recognized.

To remedy this situation, we believe that a joint federal-provincial-First Nation process needs to be established that properly and accurately reflects who our citizens are and, more importantly, who legitimately represents them. Therefore, if band support funding or other specific provincial funding is based upon membership, we will continue to lag behind until our reporting is recognized.

To enhance the quality of life in First Nations' evolving needs, we need to build a meaningful and collaborative partnership that gives access to the lands and resources as set out in our mutual treaty entitlements; a tripartite relationship that moves beyond conflict and despair and embraces shared benefits; a process that develops common understandings that meet our changing needs; a process that is innovative, restores nationhood and brings a positive experience to Canadians, Ontarians and the Anishinabek. It is our intention to support key developments that are culturally relevant and that give recognition to First Nation laws.

To address the challenges of the inconsistencies of band support funding in the operations of our governments and governance, we propose an opportunity for all of us, and that is to establish a special committee of federal, provincial and First Nations experts to explore this idea. To ensure that there is legitimacy to the committee, it must have the power and authority to make key recommendations that are supported by all levels of leadership and have an implementation process. We would need to scope out a joint and mutual process on the framework of this committee.

To do nothing will only fan the fire of conflict and unrest. As long as we feel that there is no clear process of consultation and accommodation on matters of importance to our lands and resources, we will remain at odds. To avoid this looming crisis, we offer this recommendation in a respectful way that will give all of our citizens an opportunity to have a say. The establishment of this committee would address the severe underfunding of band support funding for First Nation governments and where cost sharing with the federal and provincial governments can be explored.

As the Ministry of Finance for this great province who has been charged with tremendous responsibility, we want to stand with you and bring prosperity and hope to all people who reside here, for our children and those yet unborn.

Just a final comment: As some of you may be aware, there are many, many communities that are in third party management. It's not because they're mismanaging; it's because they're underfunded. It's very difficult to run a government on short resources.

The other problem we have: In Garden River, for example, we have quite a few members who have graduated at the post-secondary level and are getting picked up or eaten up by other organizations and governments. We're having trouble bringing them home because we can't afford to pay them. They're making good money now because they went through the system, and they're being successful, but we want them to be successful in Garden River. The only way to get them there is to pay them properly, and the way it is now, we are unable to do that.

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It's a matter of governments looking at it and trying to help us. We are getting educated, and we're getting much better at what we do in running our governments, but we can get better by allowing our people to come home and paying them a good wage to help us help our people and help Canada. Meegwetch.

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** Thank you. Now we move to the government.

**Mr. David Oraziotti:** Thank you, Chief Sayers, for being here today; as well, Dianne, thanks for being here.

There are a couple of things that I want to touch on. One thing I want to get on the record here before I ask you a question is what I've noticed about the presentations that are scheduled today in Sault Ste. Marie: 10 of the 13 presenters are First Nation organizations, and that's fantastic. The last time the community received the committee, there were very few First Nation presentations, but I think what that highlights is the role the federal government needs to continue to play to provide resources for First Nation communities right across the province. I can certainly say that we're not going to diminish our role in advocating for First Nations with the federal government, regardless of who the federal government is, regardless of the stripe of the federal government. It goes without saying that strengthening First Nation communities in this province is in the interests of all Ontarians.

I do want to ask you a question similar to the one I asked Chief Fisher about the role the province can play, specifically in a couple of initiatives; if you want to perhaps highlight a couple of things that you think the province could do specifically to improve the quality of life for First Nations groups in Ontario.

**Chief Lyle Sayers:** It's not included in my presentation, but when you're talking about a specific item, and again this goes back to education, I'm finding that's the key to our success. I see it in Garden River. The

people who are working for us now are excellent. They're knowledgeable and we're making movement. In the past, it was always status quo; we never moved. We made a lot of good suggestions and had good ideas, but we just never took that extra step. In the last five years we've done that. We've created a number of businesses because of the people we have working for us.

Garden River, along with the Shingwauk trust, is working side by side with Algoma University to develop our own university, Shingwauk university. I think that at some time in the future, if we do get our charter, that's going to make one giant step in the right direction. It'll take time, but once we start getting our students from all over Ontario and Canada to come here, you're going to see a definite change in terms of our communities getting better at what they're doing. If we're uneducated, we're not going to go anywhere. I know that. I've seen it. I've been around long enough. It's happening.

**Mr. David Oraziotti:** You're aware of, and certainly Ms. Manitowabi highlighted in her presentation, the additional resources that the province is putting into supporting aboriginal education in Ontario schools. I know we had an opportunity at the Anishnabek conference out in Garden River, and Minister Bryant attended as well, and the discussion was a bit vague, but I do want to ask you: Can you perhaps clarify for the committee your position on the Casino Rama agreement, or whether or not you'd like to see discussions continue on that issue, or whether or not you think—

**Chief Lyle Sayers:** Casino Rama: I do know that negotiations have again been completed. There's an agreement that's coming back to the table. I guess we're meeting in a week or two to discuss it. At this point I'm in favour of the agreement. As some of you may be aware, I'm very—with regard to jurisdiction, Garden River is holding the case that we have the right to make our decisions in our own territory.

Garden River is not looking to build a casino. Those things are, how would you say—there's too many. It's not profitable, or it can be, but we do have a bingo hall under our own law that we're running, and we're doing okay with that. We're not looking at big bingos; we're just looking at the day-to-day stuff, regular bingos etc.

As for the agreement itself, I believe that aspect has been taken out for now and for another day. Money-wise, I think it looks good. I think it'll benefit us as we move forward and enable us to do more things with that. So I'm hoping that once you look at the final details, jurisdiction is left out for another day and we can move on with the new agreement, which I think would benefit all of our communities.

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** Thank you for your presentations this morning.

Is Serpent River First Nation here?

*Interjection.*

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** I'm advised that none of our other presenters are here yet, so the committee will recess until one of them arrives.

*The committee recessed from 1026 to 1044.*

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** The standing committee on finance and economic affairs will now resume. First, for the committee's benefit, Serpent River First Nation has cancelled—the road is closed—and, by agreement of the subcommittee, will appear in Timmins.

#### MISSISSAUGA FIRST NATION

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** Now we're at our 11 o'clock, the Mississauga First Nation. You have 10 minutes for your presentation. There may be up to five minutes of questioning following that. I would ask you to identify yourself for the purposes of our recording Hansard. You can begin.

**Mr. Wally Van Dyke:** Thanks very much. I'm Wally Van Dyke. I'm here from the Mississauga First Nation and I'm the education director. I'm a retired person, actually. I'm a retired teacher. I've worked with kids since I was 18 years old; I guess for about 40 years. I served in a number of different capacities. I worked with street kids, I worked with a lot of tough kids, and found some things that worked with kids, and I'd like to share that with you this morning.

I want to talk to you about the human casualties in our school systems and outside of our school systems. I want to talk about bright-eyed kids who end up in situations that none of us care to see much of. As a worker at Youth Haven in Barrie, I can't begin to describe the kinds of situations that I've had to face. I've dedicated my life in teaching to doing something with at-risk kids. I have a lot of frustration with the process because I see pockets of really neat things being done and I see nothing being done from a systemic process that's going to ensure that those pockets can continue.

I guess the question remains: How do we lose these kids? I'm going to describe a few ways to you. Basically, I submit that the conventional education system doesn't work for many of our students, particularly for aboriginal and at-risk students. It begs the question: Why not? My theory is that a lot of students get stuck in a loop. I've watched that loop happen again and again, and as a teacher, you're powerless to do anything about it. They're in the loop. They'll get into trouble at school—usually minor stuff. They'll get detentions; they'll miss or skip those detentions. They can get into conflicts with their teachers, their peers. Suspended, they'll start to do poorly in school, lose interest in school, start skipping some more, get into more trouble, more suspensions, skip more. Eventually they lose so much school time that it's starting to look like a wipeout for them. They'll get into drugs, alcohol, hormones, anything else to change the situation for them. And they'll fail some or even all of their courses.

At the end of year one that's the situation. They haven't gone very far that year. So year two, they'll go back for a fresh start. At guidance they'll get the little pep talk and a new timetable. Funnily enough, it looks a lot like last year's timetable. So you're at two starts. You saw the loop last year; the loop happens again. They'll

get into trouble: detentions, missed or skipped detentions. I don't need to go through the whole process again. It's a pattern that just gets repeated.

At the end of year two, most of the credits are failed again. So year three, they might go back for a fresh start; they might not. At guidance they'll get their little pep talk, they'll get handed their timetable: "You failed this; here, take it again. You failed this; here, take it again. You just squeezed through this? Take it at a lower level." The problem is not with the level; the problem is with the interest and the challenge.

So here we go with year three. I don't need to spend a lot of time with this slide because it's exactly the same, except the administrator would step in. He'd warn, "Hey, you're 16 now. We don't need you around here. If you don't straighten up, then we'll do something about it. You'll be out of here."

We've changed that, though. Now we wait till 18 for that same statement to happen. End of year three: Most of the credits are failed. Year four: They'll go back for a fresh start again, possibly—probably not. The administrator will warn, "You're 17." Now, we'll just have to wait till their 18th birthday partway through the year. Guidance, another pep talk, a new timetable—they're struggling. Yes, it's a loop, and it spirals downward and we're losing kids left, right and centre. So now we know how we lose them.

It's not that the courses are too hard for the students; instead, the students are too challenging for the courses. There are some really neat things to teach. I'm going to show you a few things that could be taught. I see excitement in the kids every time they take them. We need to challenge these kids. If we continue in the way we're going, as their self-esteem and behavioural issues spiral out of control, in order for them to find some self-esteem somewhere they'll look in other areas. Drug and alcohol abuse spirals out of control as well; hassles at home etc. It's a really familiar tune. As long as that scenario continues, the chance of excelling in educational, occupational and societal areas becomes more and more diminished.

In the end, the individual has not only lost valuable education time in the adolescent time period, but now they might be fighting bigger dragons: addiction and/or crime. Even if they beat those dragons and turn their lives around, they're still forced to play a tough educational catch-up game. I have kids walk into my office so many times—19 years old, five and a half credits; 19 years old, eight credits; 40 years old, no credits. That's a long road to go. Both the individual and the community suffer.

#### 1050

I think the cycle can be broken. Here's the way I've seen it broken, time and time again—I've never seen it fail. We put in a program like that at Nantyr Shores, the school I was at just before I retired. Students with multiple grade 9 failures were targeted for a special at-risk program. There were 17 kids there with six or more failures that we picked out. I could have picked out 27 or 37 in that same school. Two kids had eight failures—a

total wipe-out year. Students were given an adventure-based package—a four-credit package. I taught communication technology, which is really high-tech AV—audio production, video production, digital photography, photo re-touching, website authoring, 3-D animation, all kinds of neat things. We paired that with English. We had science and phys ed paired together.

These are the kids. They're not stupid kids; they're not bad kids; they're just kids. They want to learn. They want to have fun. They want to see different places. They want to be challenged. You get them 40 feet up in the air and you got their attention. They want to be stretched. They want to have some time on their own, some downtime.

I had these kids take self-portraits and scenery pictures when they were out there. That's one of the best scenery pictures I've come around in a long time, and it was taken by a kid who was written off in the school system. This kid ran like heck to try and get to that spot with a self-timer on, but he had to do it himself; we couldn't take it for him.

They want to talk sometimes. They want to get quiet sometimes. They want to just take time to enjoy things sometimes.

We teach them some self-concept. It's an adventure-based counselling program, a series of well-designed adventure activities that give them success experiences, which helps them feel good about themselves. There are trust-building exercises, there's goal setting, there are group experiences. Basically, if you build on physical trust and the necessity of it when they're belaying a knot—without trust, there's no glue to hold the relationships together. So that's the important first step. Then the transfer from physical safety to emotional safety happens easily. There's no more passiveness and resistance to learning. A kid sitting in your class: "Yeah, just teach me how to learn if you can."

They do need things. They basically co-operate and things gel. There are magical moments. There was a kid who wanted to do the portage by himself. He talked about it the whole trip. He couldn't do it. Halfway through he was going to [*inaudible*], and we said, "Just a minute. Here, we'll [*inaudible*] it." So it's an inefficient process, but the bottom line is, we didn't push him into it; he decided he wanted to do it, so we supported him in that effort. There are two people watching, one person carrying, but the point is, the person did it by himself and was proud of it.

There's a lot of theory behind it. There's an adventure wave—briefing, peak experience, debrief. There's a bedrock of trust throughout underneath the instructor and the group. It's not new stuff. This curriculum was around in the early 1980s. It works. We know it works, but we're not using it.

The end result at Nantyr was, at the end of the semester, all 17 kids got all four credits. That's a 544% increase—not 100%, not 200%. Those credits weren't "gimme" credits; they earned them. It was a total turnaround in school. Their self-esteem was re-established. They were back on track.

Put in perspective, for that group of students, they averaged 1.47 credits in that first year of school. At that rate, it would have taken 20.4 years to get through high school—not going to happen. Sadly, some of those kids might not even have made it through those 20 years, and thousands in this country are on exactly the path. I said that I could have taken 27 kids out of that same school. You can do that in schools right across the province.

There are a few reasons to break that cycle: for the sake of humanity, for these kids, for the community, and I think for the dollar.

I want to address the financial perspective since this is a financial committee. At current INAC rates, instead of about \$750,000 to educate these kids, it would have cost them almost four million bucks. That doesn't even begin to count the spending on the extra items that would happen if there were problems with these people's lives. While we're trying to meet budgets, that extra money is spent for negligible benefits year after year after year. "Here's another four million bucks; here's another four million bucks," and it's maddening in teaching. If we assume that the failure rate is 5%—and it's actually a lot higher; for us it's almost 50%—for every 1,000 schools, that's like running 50 of them for nothing. You're paying for school plant, for staffing, for resources, and still we think we don't have a few extra bucks to throw into an extra program that might make a difference for kids. So the loop continues year after year, and we expect things to change. It's nuts; that's the definition of insanity. Let's stop that, and let's get on to recovering students.

It's a systemic problem, and it needs a systemic solution. Here's the solution: You start with some awareness. You build centres. As far as different areas of the community are concerned, you've got healthy living concepts, health centres, not disease centres, like our hospitals; personal initiative centres, where you work on self-concept; education design centres, where you design a different type of education; healing centres; and historical-cultural centres. You build programs around those.

When you're talking about journey-building kinds of ideas, you need to look at confidence matters. You can do that through initiatives. If you're looking at schools, you need preparation matters, and self-concept is the foremost point in that preparation. If you're looking at helping people who have fallen off the wagon, you need to look at programs that will provide healing, because the individual does matter. If you're looking at building community, it's really important because, yes, community does matter, and the community is only as strong as how well it takes care of the individual.

I think we should be working on building an equal economy. There's lots of neat things that can be done in the north here as well, because business does matter and it's important.

To do all that, you need vision. You can't be retrospective about things. This system works because it works with the individual and the community, it works with education and the economy, and it works with

journey-building and visionary kinds of things at the other end of the spectrum, helping those who are having difficulty with that. It all works together.

You can put some neat programs in place for kids. We had a studio where they did a cable TV show. They can get creative with things. You can put a few dollars toward some equipment that's going to make a difference for kids, and it's no longer questions and answers off a sheet of paper. This is an animation a kid did: The top flips open, the wheel spins and the flame comes out. The kid was just amazingly proud of that animation. Same thing here: It's a 3-D modelling scenario; it doesn't exist, but they've got texture and everything, and it's helped them in their journey-building process.

Journey-building is a conscious choice, it's a visionary imperative, and it's a human need, as far as I'm concerned. Kids need that too.

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** You have about half a minute left.

**Mr. Wally Van Dyke:** Okay, thanks.

You can work on an equal economy, because we need a different economy. We can look at an imploding, commodity-driven, oil-based economy, or we can look at a growing economy.

There are all kinds of neat projects. I've done buildings with kids. There are amazing things that can be taught. Thomas Edison had a line about putting his money on the sun and solar energy 100 years ago. There are all kinds of neat products and things that need to be taught. If we're teaching construction, we shouldn't be teaching it out of textbooks that are 30 years old. We're educating for 20 to 30 years into the future, and we need to keep that in mind. There are all kinds of products out there—chainless-drive bikes, amazing things—and different courses that can be taught, and it all happens through that.

We need better value for our education, and there's a handout that describes that.

I'd like to make a proposal that we have special student-recovery departments. Aboriginal education centres could function as satellite schools for that, for at-risk programs. We could implement short-term recovery programs, up to five-day programs—get the kids out, sit them down and say, "Hey, what's up?" and get them through a ropes course etc. You can have long-term recovery programs as well, multi-credit packages like we did there.

We owe it to the kids, and that's the reason why. They're just kids, but I'll tell you, that's our future, and unless we're plopping some extra money into some of those kinds of programs, we're not going to make it as a school system.

**1100**

I want to share with you that that program at Nantyr shut down the year I retired, and that was the reason I retired. When I see stuff you can do with kids where you get that kind of success, and they say, "No, there's no extra money in the program for that," it's as frustrating as hell for teachers. So now I'm retired; I can do a few

things on my own. I did a lot of work with the Mississauga First Nations. I saw programs that made a difference for kids there. We worked with the APS community, the Anishinabek Police Service, to put kids and cops together. There is just so much that can be done.

Unless we have targeted funding that's systemic in nature, we're going to continue to have pockets of little programs like Nantyr that pop up here, there and everywhere else when someone has a good idea, and then the program funding doesn't continue, the program shuts down, and we have lost it. I think it's a shame. Thanks.

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** Thank you, and we'll move to this round of questioning from the official opposition.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Thank you, Mr. Van Dyke. I want to commend you for your work to bring your vast experience to what is a fairly serious issue. The Mississaugas of the New Credit are down my way. I'm rural south.

**Mr. Wally Van Dyke:** Actually, this is the Mississauga First Nation that's along the north shore, the north channel.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Yes, okay, and you're based at Blind River?

**Mr. Wally Van Dyke:** That's right.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** You mentioned—what was it, the school?

**Mr. Wally Van Dyke:** Nantyr Shores Secondary School.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Where is that?

**Mr. Wally Van Dyke:** It's a new school just south of Barrie. I was a technical director at that school. I've put in about 25 technology labs in Simcoe county. I used to serve as a technology consultant for the board. That was a new school there, and we had a chance to put in some really interesting equipment. We had a third-year Ryerson student come up to speak to the students and he was just blown away. He said, "My God, these grade 11 students are doing second-year Ryerson work here." That's the kind of interest. If you look at the shot of the students working on the computers, they're all focused; there's no playing games. They've got neat things to do and they enjoy doing them.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** We heard from Pic River First Nation this morning of another success story as well in a particular school. We also heard the lament about the lack of funds from the federal government. One of the figures we got was that elementary teachers at native schools make 30% less salary than other elementary teachers.

**Mr. Wally Van Dyke:** That's exactly true. My salary is a lot less now than when I was teaching in the public system, and I have a more responsible job. That's a real problem—parity between the aboriginal schools and the public schools, for starters—and also individual students.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** One other thing we heard, again with one particular community, was cuts to IPRC identification, and they made mention of substance abuse and, again, concerns with FAE and FAS, fetal alcohol syndrome. I'm not sure why that would have happened. I

don't know whether that's a federal decision or a provincial decision as far as this—

**Mr. Wally Van Dyke:** I'm not sure either, and it is unfortunate that there is such a significant difference.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** So I guess it's an easy question to ask: How do we fix it? Do we scrap the federal system? Do we hand it over to the province? Do we set up native school boards? Do we look at other models? I think of the Amish community in New York state, where they asked the New York state government to leave all the old one-room schools. I am a graduate of a one-room school. It worked for me. Our farm was out in the sticks, and it worked very well. Maybe it didn't work for everybody. Is that the model that we're seeing in native communities?

**Mr. Wally Van Dyke:** Our First Nation is tied into the public school boards fairly closely. We have tuition agreements with them. We have an adult education school on-site. The concern is that by the time I see the adult students, a lot of them haven't gotten through their OSSD, and it's for reasons like I outlined.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** That's high school, is it?

**Mr. Wally Van Dyke:** The OSSD is the Ontario secondary school diploma, yes. So they haven't gotten through their high school.

In an adult scenario, I think we should be looking at continuing education, not at catching up for high school. That's why I've been working with the high schools. We're looking at putting in a residential centre that would deal with at-risk kids. But I really want to emphasize that this is not about what we've done at Nantyr or what we could do at Mississauga. This is a systemic problem that really needs to have a focused approach. I'd like to see the Ministry of Education take a hard look at that concept. Whether it's done federally or provincially, it's the model that needs to be addressed.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Just a quick one: The Ministry of Education does have an aboriginal unit.

**Mr. Wally Van Dyke:** Yes.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Do you work with them?

**Mr. Wally Van Dyke:** Yes, we do.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** What do they do?

**Mr. Wally Van Dyke:** In our local high school, for example, we have a native resource room. That's just been initiated fairly recently. It provides a room for aboriginal students to go to and feel more comfortable, where they can take a team approach to it. It's been a great help, but there's more that needs to be done for the general at-risk student population for starters, and in particular for the students who aren't making it to school because they're skipping and running into the hassles we talked about.

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** Thank you for your presentation.

#### MAMAWESWEN, THE NORTH SHORE TRIBAL COUNCIL

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** It's my understanding that the North Shore Tribal Council Education Unit is here. Would you come forward, please? You have 10 minutes

for your presentation. There may be five minutes of questioning. I would ask you to identify yourself for the purposes of our recording Hansard, and you can begin.

**Ms. Marnie Yourchuk:** Thank you for this opportunity to present to you. My name is Marnie Yourchuk. I work with the North Shore Tribal Council as the education program manager. My roles and responsibilities are to the seven First Nations along the north shore. That includes Batchewana First Nation, Garden River First Nation, Thessalon First Nation, Mississauga First Nation, Serpent River First Nation, Sagamok Anishinawbek, and what was formerly Whitefish Lake First Nation. They have recently changed their name, and I apologize that I cannot pronounce their Ojibwa name properly—I apologize, but it is formerly Whitefish Lake First Nation.

My roles and responsibilities lie in education, right from daycare to elementary, secondary and post-secondary. I sit on several committees at the post-secondary level as the native adviser. In my presentation today, I'm going to highlight some of the items in the briefing notes just to bring some of the concerns forward.

As you may be aware, lifelong learning is a treaty right and it's not defined as provincial or federal. Part of the problem lies in the jurisdiction. The First Nations that I represent have federal funding; the federal funding is not adequate to pay for provincial school board tuition agreements and other items. Also, daycares on First Nations are funded and regulated through the ministry, and that is once again provincial, so there are a lot of jurisdictional issues.

Again, I'm just going to go through a little bit of the briefing note to highlight some of the items.

Adequate funding has always been an issue, as well as jurisdiction, so there need to be some intergovernmental discussions on how you could streamline it as well as to better adequately fund it, but also to be more efficient in the funding. To do that, you also need to include the First Nations in the discussion.

#### 1110

Just recently, on January 15, thestar.com stated, "Overwhelmed and underfunded agencies say it's a growing struggle to offer services ranging from job training and affordable rent...."

Urban aboriginal populations "often find it difficult to access the services they need to prosper. Off-reserve, they can no longer access the federally funded services once available to them and provincial governments are often unwilling to take financial responsibility, leaving those in need in a vacuum."

We have a very high urban aboriginal population that really doesn't fit with the federal funding. The First Nations aren't able to assist them in their programs because their programs and services are offered only for those on-reserve. So there's a whole group of aboriginal populations in the urban centres that is not receiving any of the services. When they do attempt to receive provincial services, often they're referred to federal agencies which,

once again, were not able to assist those people because our mandate is only for on-reserve.

As a background, recently the Ministry of Education has developed the First Nation, Metis and Inuit education policy framework, and a lot of money has been spent to close the education gap in the provincial systems. We do see some of the progress right now with the aboriginal students, and some of the services are now starting to appear within the provincial school boards. More money, though, is needed.

I'm just going to go to the recommendations on page 3.

Just recently, the Ipperwash inquiry released their recommendations, and education has been a large component of that.

Public awareness campaigns; treaty rights curriculum development—but we need to have the First Nations involved in this. A lot of the money is going to provincial school boards, but there's no control of that money to actually have the First Nations be the advisory group to say, "Hey, this is what works for our students. Take our advice."

Right now those partnerships are developing, but nowhere in legislation, and nowhere, can the First Nations or aboriginal organizations access those funds. They go directly to the province, the provincial school boards, and we have no access to those funds. So where the education needs to lie in the curriculum development, those funds should actually be going to aboriginal organizations to develop those histories, to develop those curriculums, because that's where the truth lies.

Even with treaty rights and public awareness, it should be aboriginals delivering that. It shouldn't be someone who studied native studies and things like that. The truth has to come from within our own First Nations, within our own elders. It should be proposal-driven, where provincial organizations cannot access those funds unless they have aboriginal partnerships.

The funding should flow to the First Nations and not just to provincial organizations.

Cross-cultural awareness and sensitivity training should be required for all public servants and, once again, be delivered by aboriginals.

The Ministry of Education: A new aboriginal department has been created, but there should be an aboriginal department within each school board. Focused curriculum development and resources for native language and native studies are required. Develop native-language teacher networks, professional development workshops and conferences. Money is coming into the school boards for the native resource, like native language. However, we do not have the speakers. And because we do not have the speakers qualified under the Ontario College of Teachers rules—we do have elders, we do have our traditional speakers that hold the knowledge, but they can't access the school boards. The school boards are crying, "We can't find teachers who are qualified." But you're looking in the wrong place. You're not looking at the aboriginal qualifications. You're not looking at the

traditional knowledge that these elders have, our traditional speakers. To us they're the highest-valued teachers within our communities and they're the ones holding the knowledge, except we can't access them into the school boards because of the way the legislation is set up currently; so, annual conferences for native language teachers.

Increase native trustee positions from one to two. Right now we do have representation on the school boards with the native trustees. However, they have a district so large that they include all aboriginals, on- and off-reserve, and the Metis and Inuit within the region. Part of the problem is that the school boards are not allotting travel dollars to visit. If you know First Nations relations, the First Nations require physical visitation. They want to discuss issues in person, but there's only one native trustee to cover this huge area. Just in the Algoma region, we have seven First Nations just with the North Shore Tribal Council, but we have three other outlying ones: Hornepayne, Chapleau Cree and Missanabie Cree, which is local. We also have Michipicoten and Brunswick House. Just to have a regional meeting, those people have to travel three, four, five hours to come to Sault Ste. Marie, so you can see the difficulty in that. So the native trustees should be increased to two, and they should have a travel budget.

Best practices such as ethical space: Right now in one of our schools in Blind River there is an ethical space, meaning it's a native resource room with a traditional mentor worker, where the students can go if they're having a hard time in school or just to study. Instead of getting kicked out, there's a place for them to go just to cool down, collect their thoughts, complete their work and then return back to the classroom. This is working, and I have included a letter. Part of the problem is that there's no continued funding. The school boards are asking First Nations to fund their salaries. With the new monies coming in, there should be money dedicated to setting up these native resource rooms within all provincial schools with high aboriginal populations. It would solve the dropout rate, it would give the students a sense of pride, and it's just a really good way to keep the students in school.

Once again, there should be mandatory native education additional teaching qualifications for all Ontario teachers.

Aboriginal advisory groups core funding: Right now the provincial school boards are creating partnerships with their aboriginal partners, except they once again are pulling from this pot, so there's no money dedicated just to setting up these systems. They should have an operating budget, and that should be within all schools.

Publish First Nations financial contributions. That would just assist with public awareness. Right now, the general public does not understand that First Nations do pay for their students through tuition agreements; just locally, it's about \$3 million or \$4 million. If that was published, it would help with the public awareness campaign.

Breakfast and lunch programs in all schools.

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities: Similar investments in aboriginal education at the post-secondary level are required, so an aboriginal branch or unit within the ministry.

Create an aboriginal policy framework for post-secondary institutes similar to the provincial school boards.

Fund cross-cultural awareness and sensitivity training for all post-secondary institute staff and develop human rights policies and anti-harassment policies. Even today, in the year 2008, these are not happening.

Create more incentives for aboriginal apprentices and employers. There are some barriers in the current legislation.

We need to change the journeyman-apprentice ratio for aboriginal organizations and local delivery mechanisms. Right now we do not have enough journeymen to train the First Nations apprentices willing to go through the program, and that is a real issue.

Increase the aboriginal education and training strategy, AETS, funding and make it core funding for all post-secondary institutes. Right now, every year it is proposal-based, and the post-secondary schools, the universities, aren't aware of what's coming, so it makes it very hard to plan for services and supports within each school.

#### 1120

Recognize the aboriginal post-secondary institute's accreditation process. There is a briefing note attached about FNTI's current funding situation. Locally, we have Shingwauk Education Trust trying to develop Shingwauk university with Algoma University, and it's very difficult to get the funding for that as well as to have the accreditation process. Any aboriginal post-secondary institute must partner and lose funds to an existing post-secondary institute.

I do have some questions attached in regard to the provincial tuition agreements and some questions about funding and jurisdiction, so you can review those at your leisure.

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** This round of questioning goes to the NDP.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I have three questions, and hopefully we can get them all in in the five minutes.

You made a very profound statement. You said that the truth lies with the aboriginal community, and I'd just like you to expand on that a little bit. Is it of necessity that the truth be heard from elders as opposed to other people? What is the rationale for that?

**Ms. Marnie Yourchuk:** Right now, if you're in any provincial school—and I've heard it from principals, teachers. They've said, "I taught the whole three pages on aboriginals, so I've done my job." That is not what's happening. The history books are not written by aboriginals. There are no history books yet about the residential school survivors: what is happening, how it has affected the aboriginal communities.

Just as an example, I remember being a young student standing on a corner in Montreal. There's a plaque on

one of the buildings—I can't remember the street—that says, "Here lies the place where"—I forget which general—"killed one of the aboriginal chiefs with his bare hands." There's a plaque on the wall right on the building. Right now, that's the history that everyone celebrates. It's not good for the aboriginal student. And you wonder why the students aren't succeeding. They do not see themselves in the curriculum; they do not see themselves in a positive way. It still almost says "savages," and that is not the truth.

Pre-contact, the aboriginal communities were very self-sufficient. They had multiple languages, they had trade, they had communities. After contact is when the social issues started happening. If you look back, I believe in the 1920s there was a ministry document from Indian affairs saying that "aboriginals cannot congregate." It was against the law, and if you saw anyone congregate, they'd throw them in jail. That is the reality that most people do not know, and that's the information and the history that has to come out. Then you will start seeing the public awareness, you'll start understanding why there are blockades on the roads: because government officials like yourselves are not moving fast enough on these issues. We have hundreds of years of history that is just wiped out. Up until now, it has not been written in the history books. That's where the money needs to be invested. You need to partner with the aboriginal communities that hold that knowledge.

Shingwauk had a vision—but it wasn't the residential school that happened. He's a local historical chief from Garden River, and there are descendants in Garden River who could actually tell you stories about their great-great-grandfather and all the family and the history there. That is not written, but that is what Shingwauk university is trying to establish. With all the rules, regulations, the hoops that they have to jump through just to get the point across that it's needed, there are a lot of barriers, and they're coming down slowly. It's positive to see that the ministry is finally putting money into aboriginal education, but it's not fast enough. With that, you also have to have the knowledge and the people with that correct knowledge pass it on.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Do I still have time?

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** There's a minute left.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I'll just skip to the last question. It's about the travel budgets for trustees. In the Legislature, we have travel budgets for each MPP, but we allocate more money for people in northern communities. My colleague Gilles Bisson has a bigger budget, for instance, than I do because the land is vast and he has to visit communities where there are no roads and he has to go by air. How much money would be needed to have the travel budgets increased for the aboriginal trustees to adequately meet face to face with their constituents and to find out their needs? How much are we looking at here?

**Ms. Marnie Yourchuk:** I don't have the exact figures because it's based on travel rates, but what's happening right now, the school boards—almost out of the gener-

osity of their heart—allow their trustees to go, and may pay for it. It has always been a contention. But what's happening, the North Shore Tribal Council just in this region coordinates those meetings with all of the First Nations to try to eliminate some of that travel and try to better utilize the time of the trustee to have one meeting where we come together. It wouldn't be more than a couple of thousand dollars, and that would be for each school board.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** So this is a relatively small amount you're looking at.

**Ms. Marnie Yourchuk:** Yes.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Okay.

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** Thank you for your presentation.

**Ms. Marnie Yourchuk:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** If I could have the committee's attention: The next presenter is not here, but there is someone willing to read the presentation into the record. Are we agreed with that? Agreed.

What about questions?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** How can we question someone who—

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** Okay. Well, I thought I would ask.

We'll ask the North Shore Tribal Council representative to come forward and read it into the record, but there will be no questions. If you could just identify yourself, again, for the record.

**Chief Lyle Sayers:** Good morning again. My name is Chief Lyle Sayers. I'm also the chairman of the North Shore Tribal Council of the seven communities. I'm in my second term with them.

Norma Diamond was to make the presentation this morning for the tribal council, but she's not here; she was unable to make it. What I have is not her presentation but some of the points that she wanted me to touch on, and it has to do with economic development.

Before I go there, we talked about Chief Shingwauk and his vision, and about the history. I am a direct descendant of Chief Shingwauk. He's my great-great-great-grandfather. Just to let you know, in the War of 1812, there were 400-and-some British soldiers and over 1,700 Indian allies who fought that war. Chief Shingwauk was there, Tecumseh, and other great warriors around our area. If we didn't have the Indian allies, there would be no Canada today; I guarantee you that. It was the Indian allies who saved Canada. If you want to check your history books, that should be in there, and that would make people like myself very proud. What she said is true. We need to put the truth in our history books.

With regard to economic development, I attended the Ontario economic summit in Niagara Falls a couple of months ago. There were a lot of MPs, MPPs, university presidents, people who run Ontario. I was very proud to be there. I went last year and I went again this year. What I found was that there is very little known about First Nations people. They talk about bringing in immigrants to fill in the lower-paying jobs that need to be filled but

people don't want, and they're talking about ways to attract them. In the meantime, we have communities in Ontario—134 communities—that have people who want to work, yet they're not being looked at to try to resolve some of these problems. We've got good people who are being ignored, I guess, if that's the proper word. But we want to bring in all of these other people to do these other jobs that are maybe not as high-profile. I have told them twice now that they need to come to our communities and start lobbying us and coming to us to try to fill some of these positions, because we're there.

Another issue that we have with economic development is our land designation. We have many, many people—non-natives—who want to do business with First Nations, but because of our land tenure, they don't have the security. If they put up a building or their machines and that, they don't have the—I don't have the proper word—when you put something up for collateral, they don't have any way of protecting it under the rules, the way they are now. The government says to us that we have to designate our land, which means we have to give it to the federal government, the government gives it to the province and then they give it back to us. “Now you can designate the land.” What we're doing is, we're giving up our land. That's what's happening. Garden River, for example, refuses to do that. We will not designate our land. Yet we have all these people who want to do business with us, which would benefit not only Garden River but Sault Ste. Marie and other people.

**1130**

Again, it's the Indian Act that does that to us. We need to set up some kind of tripartite. I keep saying this because it's important that the province be involved in our discussions. We do it in a number of other areas. We need to do it here because, if you've got a family that's working, that has money coming in, that's a success story. I see it every day in Garden River. We do have successes. The more we can do it, the better off we're all going to be. I keep saying that. I'm not just here for the Anishnabek people; it's for all Ontarians and how we can do business together. You need to look at us in a more positive manner. We're looked at as not educated, that we like to drink, that we like to smoke, we like to do this, but we're not looked at in a positive manner. We need to change that thinking, and the only way to do that, again—and she mentioned it earlier—is to make individuals knowledgeable about us and what we're all about.

In northern Ontario, the economy is dependent on natural resources, non-forest timber products and eco-tourism. In southern Ontario it's more industrialized. You've got a lot of business with the United States, so you're able, because they're closer, to get a lot more of those businesses. There is less employment in agriculture, forestry and mining. Capacity-growing sectors are information and technology, financial and business services.

Requirements for First Nations economic infrastructure: When I talk about designated land, that creates

the problem, because we are unable to bring people in to develop partnerships with us. When I go to FedNor for funding, they immediately contact Indian Affairs. Red flags go up: “Oh, that land's not designated. We can't fund it. We can't do this; we can't do that.” I hear that on a daily basis, not only for our particular area but from other communities. We're maintaining our infrastructure, but the monies we do have coming are very minimal.

Skilled resources: We can't pay the people, as I mentioned earlier in my other reports. We've got some good people out there, but we're just unable to get them home because we cannot pay them what they should be making. We always seem to be at the bottom of the totem pole when it comes to paying salaries. I don't know why. We always seem to be underfunded.

Training and skills development: A gentleman made a presentation. It works on how you educate people. We need to think out of that box, think of better ways we can develop our membership.

Access to capital; access to local and regional, national and global markets: Again, in Garden River we're doing that. We're trying to reach out to the United States etc. to sell our products. We've got some products that we want to sell and we need help from the government to get through some of this red tape stuff that we need to go through in order to move forward.

I would invite you at some time, every one of you, to come to Garden River and have a look at what we're doing. If we can do it here, we can do it anyplace, but we need your help.

Viable projects for First Nations; obtaining a skilled workforce that is educated and trained in current sectors; tuition and training benefits; partnerships with industry, and renewable energy: People knock on our door on a regular basis because we're beside the Great Lakes. We'd love to do business but we've got too many of these hoops we need to jump through, and that scares off the non-natives who want to work with us. It scares them off because we can't protect them. We're here to do business. We're not here to try to pull the wool over anybody's eyes. We're here to work with the non-native society in the best way we can. In order to do that, we need to get rid of that red tape in order to employ our people and non-natives. Let's all work together.

That's basically it. I wish I had her document but I don't. We'll make sure that we do get you a copy. Thank you.

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** Very good. The committee, every member, will get a copy of that. Thank you for your presentation.

#### ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' FEDERATION OF ONTARIO—ALGOMA LOCAL

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** I now call on the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario—Algoma Local. Please come forward. Good morning. You have 10 minutes for your presentation. There may be up to five minutes of questioning following that. I would ask you to

identify yourself for the purposes of our recording Hansard.

**Ms. Vel Liut:** My name is Vel Liut. As president of the Algoma district elementary teachers, I welcome this opportunity to participate in these consultations.

I represent approximately 460 public elementary teachers in Algoma district, a region which is unique in its geography and diverse in its composition. At the time of amalgamation, six predecessor school boards were brought together to form one district school board and, thereby, one elementary teacher local. In area, this is 70,000 square kilometres, with communities clustered in six main areas and, as I like to say, a lot of trees and moose in between. We extend from the town of Spanish to the east, west to Sault Ste. Marie and north to Elliot Lake, Chapleau, Wawa and Hornepayne.

Access, transportation, sharing of resources, distance from a major centre and declining enrolment are the realities of our district school board, all of which represent major challenges where funding and finances are concerned. As well, the funding cuts imposed by the previous Conservative government resulted in serious program losses and represented a major setback to public education in Ontario. After a decade of public pressure, Dr. Rozanski's task force and a Liberal government since 2003, education has seen a 17% increase in funding, which is substantial and welcome. We are rebuilding our public education system, and this government has made it a priority. Adequate funding is the key to ensuring a high-quality education for all students. Our schools are good and they're getting better, but more can be done.

ETFO remains concerned, however, about the discrepancy which exists between the funding of secondary students and the funding which is targeted for elementary. This gap in funding has created a two-tiered education system, and it is this point I wish to address first.

Historically, the student-focused funding formula has placed a higher value on secondary students than elementary students. In 2007-08, the gap in funding between an elementary and a secondary student is \$711. We also understand that this gap is narrowing, with the government's focus on education and mending the damages done in the last decade. In 2003-04 this gap was \$1,318, and that's a 46% improvement in four years. However, \$711 is still a significant amount, and this shortfall represents a barrier to ensuring that all elementary students receive the high-quality, well-rounded education that our elementary students also deserve to be successful. This means fewer resources in elementary classrooms, fewer specialist teachers for elementary students and less preparation time for elementary teachers. A considerable number of ministry initiatives aimed at improving student achievement have been put in place in the last several years. Our teachers have continued to embrace these new ideas and have kept abreast of new programs and professional development necessary to stay current and raise student achievement. Student success is dependent on better funding for elementary education, so that school

boards can afford to hire the number of teachers they really need to reduce class sizes in junior and intermediate grades and to provide the kind of planning time that is necessary for teachers to prepare and assess. There seems to be no rational explanation for the difference in funding between the two panels.

The foundation grant: Most of the line item differences in the foundation grant are also inexplicable, particularly since they are on a per pupil basis. Why is staff development per elementary student \$1 less than per secondary student? That small difference means a loss of \$1.25 million to elementary education. Why are textbooks and learning materials funded at \$27 more per secondary student than elementary student? This means that \$34 million is not available for elementary resources. Why are classroom supplies funded at \$105 more for a secondary student? That is a loss of \$131 million for elementary classroom supplies. Why are classroom consultants funded at \$6 less for each elementary student—a loss of \$7.5 million? Elementary students receive \$14 less than their secondary counterparts for classroom computers, a loss of \$17.5 million. We are wrestling with this data and can find no explanation for the differences.

#### 1140

The Liberal government has acknowledged that the gap in funding is problematic by having addressed 46% of it since 2003. It has also promised \$150 million to assist students in grades 4 to 8 over the course of this mandate. We look forward to this next step in reducing the gap further and hope that an even longer-term plan will be forthcoming to address the overall discrepancy.

Declining enrolment: Enrolment projections for Algoma schools show a steady decline. This is also true for all but about six school boards in the province. In addition, many Algoma schools are located in small rural communities which are some distance from the next school. Many buildings are in poor condition and indeed have been deemed prohibitive to repair.

Although it is obvious that some of these schools will need to close because of enrolment, the newly created consolidated schools will need to offer a better alternative. Specifically, each school should have a full-time teacher-librarian. In spite of the government's current emphasis on literacy, few elementary schools in the province have a teacher-librarian, whose role is to assist students with literacy and research skills. Algoma's elementary schools do not have any teacher-librarians, but rather a few hours of library technician time, usually shared with other schools or duties, comprises the sum total of this kind of support. None of our elementary schools even qualify for funding for a teacher-librarian.

Elementary students are disadvantaged by this per-pupil approach to funding. The funding for guidance teachers is also insufficient for even the grades 7 and 8 classes to receive support. Once again, the per-pupil funding model does not allow most elementary schools to generate even one tenth of a guidance teacher.

If the government is serious about improving high school graduation rates and if it is serious about its focus

on ensuring that students who struggle academically receive the individual support they need to succeed, then more resources need to be allocated to elementary programs and the staff who support students at risk. Many at-risk students learn best through hands-on learning. While our generalist teachers in Algoma do the best they can, nothing can compare with the potential an elementary student can achieve with smaller class sizes and specialist teachers who have the time and resources to provide for those who need extra assistance.

Minister Wynne has been touring schools observing the impact of the primary class size cap, and was heard to say in Thames Valley, "While we are encouraged by improved test scores and the rise in student achievement, we are also very encouraged to see stable relationships between teachers and learners in the school environment." I hope that the government will move quickly on making this same change for junior and intermediate classes by imposing an appropriate class size cap. Given the recent report on safety in Toronto schools, we would be foolish to ignore the fact that smaller classes and more teachers could alleviate the stresses. This is not just a big city problem.

With reference to intermediate grades specifically, there has been much news around the province with regard to moving them into secondary schools. We find it odd that economic consultants are being hired in some district school boards to tell us that we need to close schools and move grades 7-8 students into the high schools, all to solve a financial burden. We would hope that good pedagogy and respect for the needs of the adolescent learner would guide this decision and not simply the bottom line.

Elementary students belong in elementary schools with elementary teachers. Research shows that elementary schools promote stable relationships between students and teachers, provide an intellectually stimulating and co-operative environment, and enjoy a higher level of parental involvement than do secondary schools. Research also indicates that students from 10 to 15 show gains in mathematics, language and reading when they attend small schools with lower student-teacher ratios and shared teaching. Rather than transferring young students to secondary schools, school boards should work with the Ministry of Education to ensure public elementary schools receive the necessary resources to offer a wide range of programs which build student success.

Minister Wynne has told the press that the province wants to graduate more well-rounded students and has hinted at the government's plans to re-introduce the kind of hands-on, experiential learning that keeps kids engaged in school. She was talking about design-tech classes, family studies, arts programs and guidance support in the later elementary years. We look forward to the return of these kinds of programs, the specialist teachers who will need to teach them, as well as the important infusion of funding to pay for them. More teachers in a building provide supervision and a safer environment for our students. This is the bottom line.

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** Thank you. This round of questioning will go to the government.

**Mr. David Oraziotti:** Thank you, Vel, for your presentation. I want to thank you for your passion and enthusiasm in the work that you do on behalf of many of the teachers, students and parents in the area.

I do want to highlight a couple things, though. You're aware that the Algoma District School Board and Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board funding per pupil is well above the provincial average. The average is about \$2,000 per student. That has increased over four years, and we're about \$2,800 per student. What that's really meant is there are 68 more teachers, in both boards combined, in the area now teaching, who have jobs in this area because of the increase in our funding formula. If we had continued on the same path, there would be 65 fewer teachers in our area, despite the declining enrolment. So we have a declining enrolment in the area of about 3,000 students with both boards combined, yet we have 68 more teachers. We've obviously made those investments, and I appreciate you acknowledging the additional 17%.

We know that test scores are up, dropout rates are down, but there's more we need to do. You're aware, obviously, that we're building a new secondary school and a new elementary school for the first time in about 35 years in Sault Ste. Marie, so that's great news for the community.

I want to ask you two questions: your opinion on more integrated efforts in coordinating busing to help reduce costs that would maybe provide more resources for students and teachers, getting those dollars into the classroom where parents want to see them; as well as your opinion on the contractual arrangement. We had a four-year contract for the first time in the history of the province, which has led to tremendous peace and stability. That's allowed teachers to focus on the job at hand as opposed to what's taken place in the past. How do you feel about that? What's your opinion on the contracts going forward, the length of them, and on the busing issue?

**Ms. Vel Liut:** If I could talk about the busing issue first, I would applaud any suggestion to coordinate busing efforts and combine with other school boards, if that's what you mean. That can only address major centres; it does not address central Algoma. By the way, in central Algoma, bus routes are probably some of the longest in the province, and I don't know how we would address that any better. Some of those schools, I recognize, are quite small and may need to close and we may need to combine those. Will that make routes even longer? I'm not sure. However, it's an excellent suggestion to combine those efforts, a consortium or some such thing that would not duplicate those services. Obviously, that's a cost-saving measure that would be very valuable.

With regard to the length of contracts, having been the chief negotiator for the last two rounds, and I will be again in the next one, I can honestly say that while peace

and stability seems to be the case, I would also say—and it does allow us the time to get on with our jobs, and things have been relatively calm; however, I know from my own experience that once you get to the fourth year of a contract, you've really outgrown the conditions that you're working in. Working conditions still need to improve. The ministry initiatives and the kinds of things that have been put in place are still coming down the pipe. We still need more time, more teachers, more specialists and so on. I've been very frustrated this past year with that kind of thing because I keep having to address a new way of looking at how we are going to staff schools with declining enrolment and so on. It's increasingly becoming a problem, and it's going to be another while before we have a chance to address that in the contract.

**Mr. David Oraziotti:** Okay. I know my colleague has a question or two for you, so I'll just turn it over to her.

**Ms. Leeanna Pendergast:** Good morning. As an educator of over 20 years and a high school vice-principal, I hear everything you're saying, and I wanted to start by thanking you for acknowledging the funding cuts of the previous Conservative government. As an educator you know we've lived this, and we know the hard work that has been done over the last four years of this government's mandate and that we continue to do that hard work.

I think you've highlighted some very important and significant things that need to be looked at here this morning. The funding formula, for one, we are constantly refining. It changes; it's not a static entity, as you have acknowledged, and we continue to consult with our partners every year. In the process, \$3.7 billion has been restored to our schools, and we know as educators we've felt that. We know that we're up over \$2,000 per student in the funding formula.

We are committed to restoring the public education system. You mentioned the Rozanski report—and thank you for that. This government has put \$6.8 billion into the system, which is, as you know, over three times what Rozanski had recommended.

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** We have about a minute left.

**Ms. Leeanna Pendergast:** Thank you. To focus specifically on the elementary area, which you represent today, we have added over 5,100 elementary teachers to address class size and 1,925 new elementary specialist teachers for the arts and the shops. And we continue to renew our schools in the infrastructure area, including \$4 billion in school renewals.

I guess my question is, in talking about funding formulas, teachers, class size and infrastructure, that we all agree there's more to do. It's a long road to recovery. Where do you recommend—this is the tough question, and you know it's coming—we begin in the immediate next steps, having said all these great things this government has done and continues to do? What would you see as the immediate next-step priority?

**Ms. Vel Liut:** As far as the north is concerned—and that's what I'm mostly concerned about—where we are

losing industry in single-industry towns, where enrolment is declining, where families are really stretched, I think they need to know that there is a secure class size structure that is manageable. I know it hasn't happened too much in Algoma yet; we've only just started to see triple grading and that type of thing starting to happen. I would like to see it addressed that there will be a class size cap for junior and intermediate students. That would be my number one focus.

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** Thank you for your presentation.

I'm advised that our 12 o'clock presenter is not in the room, so we'll recess until he arrives for 12 o'clock.

*The committee recessed from 1152 to 1200.*

#### BATCHEWANA FIRST NATION

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** The committee will now reconvene. Our next presentation is by the Batchewana First Nation. You have 10 minutes for your presentation. There may be five minutes of questioning. I would ask you to identify yourself for the purposes of our recording Hansard. You can begin.

**Chief Dean Sayers:** My name is Chief Dean Sayers. I am the chief of the Batchewana First Nation here in the local area. I want to first of all thank all of those individuals who made their way here. I'm sure there are more than just members of the provincial Parliament, but I thank you guys for coming up and giving us an opportunity to have some input into the upcoming budget of the province.

You'll note that I put my correspondence in the form of a letter today, and I'm going to forward that on to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, as well as for our council's information. They did see it and have given me the endorsement to present here today.

You might note that in the top couple of lines I referred to the province as "the crown." I did that intentionally, because it's our First Nations' belief that the province of Ontario carries a fiduciary responsibility to First Nations in what is known today as Canada. Batchewana is a signatory to a pre-Confederation treaty, and in saying that, I'm saying that we were around and even had a relationship with the visitors prior to Canada coming about in 1867. We still believe strongly, and so does the crown, in that relationship. We still get our \$4 a year from you guys in exchange for a lot of things that our people enjoy today—and don't enjoy, because there has been a real shoddy interpretation of what was exchanged. On our end, we still honour that. There have been some shortcomings on the part of the government of Canada, the crown in particular.

There is a relationship that we need to, again, expand on with the province. The province does carry the honour of the crown, and the honour of the crown is at stake with the way that our treaties are currently being interpreted. We have guaranteed rights. In exchange for all this land around here that we gave up, we have guaranteed rights, including that right to education, housing, health care—

the list goes on. It's not that we want to have castles and palaces and this extravagant lifestyle. All we expected when we signed those treaties was the same quality of life as everybody else who comes to this land. When we look at hundreds and hundreds of logging trucks coming out of our territories and we don't get a cent out of those things, it's disturbing to us, because in that treaty we said that we would benefit as well, and we're getting piddles.

Within my parents' generation, if they spoke up they were thrown in jail. They weren't allowed to speak. They weren't allowed to leave the reserve. They had to get a letter from the Indian agent saying, "Yes, you can go to town today, but I want to know what you're going to town for and how long you're going to be there and when you're coming home." That's the way they were treated.

Today, we now know that we have rights. Ontario specifically has some responsibility there. There's the Robinson-Huron treaty of 1850, where we said—and we all agreed; all of you guys were there, all of your forefathers were there, and you said, "We will all benefit, and when Ontario makes a profit, you guys will benefit, too." We're still getting \$4 a year; I'm sure the province has made a couple of bucks since 1850. It's ridiculous. It's a shame that we're still only getting \$4 a year. We shouldn't have to take the province of Ontario to court to get our annuities increased. Look at what you're enjoying around you.

Our people are taking stands today and saying, "If you're not going to honour those treaties, guess what? We're not going to honour those treaties anymore either, so we're going to start taking those things back." Our people are still wanting to sit down and talk about a mutually beneficial relationship with the visiting governments. We're willing to do that. In my documentation today, I'm calling for formal legislation that will compel and demand and direct those companies that are doing business in our territories, that are extracting minerals, timber products and non-forest timber products, to enter into an agreement to revenue-share in a partnership perspective.

Your court, the Supreme Court of Canada, has made numerous decisions in the last few years that said, "Yes, you have to talk to the native people in Canada about their rights, and you have to consult with them." Not only do you have to consult, but you have to actually listen to them. You can't just knock on the door and say, "Hello, I'm here," and then leave and say, "Well, I talked to them. There, now I can do what I want." No, you have to be accommodating. You have to actually sit down with us and we have to mutually benefit, and we've not seen that.

Another treaty that you may want to take a look at is the Pennefather treaty. It was an atrocity. It was an outright theft. Take a look at it; do your research.

Just recently, we took some action. The reason I'm telling you this is because we're not benefiting. We shouldn't have to come here and beg for money from the province of Ontario to meet the needs of our people. We shouldn't have life expectancy rates for First Nations

people in North America hovering around 40 to 50 years of age for a man. Just recently the Lakota released some stats saying that life expectancy for a man is 44 and for a woman is 46. That's today; we used to live to 115 to 120 years old. There needs to be some work done. We're going to, as we've already done, take steps to do that. We are doing that within our traditional territories.

We're asking the province of Ontario to share the benefits that they're reaping with First Nations, not out of your good feelings of social responsibility but as the result of a contractual obligation you have with us. We're supposed to benefit. We know how we need to work in order to benefit. We know what's going to have to happen in our communities for our people's prosperity levels to increase. We need to have those revenues, and those revenues should come directly to us. No more should we see secret memos going to treasury saying, "This is what's good for the Indians." We'll go directly to you and say, "This is what you owe us. This is the money that comes to us as First Nations people as a result of our original relationship."

Here in the document I've noted that we've got some beautiful ideas on how we can work together to be able to bring our quality of life up to the visitors' quality of life. One of the first ones is, the federal government has this year given us a commitment to \$1.5 million for a new health centre. We've asked the province for \$2 million; there's a possibility the feds are going to come up with another \$1.5 million. It's not just a regular run-of-the-mill health centre; it's an innovative approach to meeting the health care needs of our people. We're looking at incorporating research, ways of addressing diabetes, nutrition, lifestyle, traditional flora and fauna medicines and working with the Northern Ontario School of Medicine to come up with ways that physicians can work with us. There are many things that we'd like to see happen within the confines of this new regional health facility. All the native organizations in the area have endorsed that.

There are a number of those things that I've identified in my letter, but I needed you guys to at least hear today from me the perspective that the First Nations in our area are working from. It's not that we're demanding social programs. These are obligations that you inherit as the crown. The federal government as well has responsibilities, but you are the crown as well, and you have the honour of the crown to uphold. You can honour the crown by honouring your commitments to us as First Nations people in this area. Take a look at the Robinson-Huron treaty, take a look at the Pennefather treaty. The answers are there on how you need to be working with us. These were things that were thought out a long time ago.

#### 1210

There are some things that I wanted to make mention of. The licensing fees from all the angling that's happening in our communities and our territories—there's been a derogation of the fish stocks; there have been invasive species. It's a mess. We need those dollars back that

you're generating from tourists and all those other people coming into the territories taking fish out so we can restore the fish habitat. I've already mentioned this to the Minister of Natural Resources. We need to see those dollars come back to us, because we're the original managers; we never gave up anywhere. Show me where it said that we gave up our right to manage the fisheries and the water. We have been crippled because we don't have the money to manage the fisheries as we once did. We demand to have those dollars, which you're taking from the people to take the fish out of here, come back to us so we can continue with our plans for rejuvenating that fishing industry.

The same goes for the logging: We never said we were giving up our abilities, our inherent rights to manage timber harvests. Ontario has assumed that they can take that and get all these royalties, but in the meantime, we're living in squalor; we're living in poverty. Those are our resources. We demand to have a share of those funds. One of my councillors said, "We want our 35%." We'll say 50% for the province, 35% for us, but out of that 50%, they can help us in developing and coordinating some of those management models.

So we have some plans, we have some ways of being able to work together, and that's just timber and fisheries. There are many others. We're working now with Brookfield on innovative, cutting-edge, world-class global relationships with multi-conglomerate corporations around the world, like Brookfield Power, formerly Brascan. We're doing some ingenious, beautiful things with the windmill developments in the areas. We already have \$300 million worth of windmill developments in our territories here, and we're at least exploring the possibility of another \$300 million to \$400 million worth of windmill developments in our territories as well. We're developing a mutually benefiting relationship, outside of any demands from the province. This corporation recognizes our position with regard to those lands and our territories, and they're going to work with us. It's great, and we're going to benefit. But we also need the province to come and really support some of the work that we're doing and honour the commitments and obligations they have.

I just wanted to make those comments. You have the documentation. You can refer to that, and we'll look forward to some responses. As well, I did ask in here for a specific meeting with the Minister of Revenue to talk a little bit further about how we can implement some of the requests that we have here in the documentation.

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** Thank you for the presentation. This round of questioning goes to the official opposition.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Thank you, Chair, and congratulations to the chief. Dean and I go way back; I knew him probably about 15 years ago or so, when we were both kids. Dean was a community leader in the Niagara area. Congratulations on your ascendancy as chief, and thank you for your presentation to the committee. It's good to see you again.

I know my colleague Mr. Barrett has some questions. I wanted to ask you specifically about the resource sharing. I know from my time as mines minister that mining companies are required to sign impact benefit agreements with the First Nations in the area whose traditional territory may be where the mineral development is. I don't know that Batchewana has mineral potential in its territories, but I'm sure that forestry companies—you talked about fishing—would have a similar necessity to work with First Nations.

The questions are: Are you satisfied with the way that the benefit agreements process works, or do you think it should be mandated at a certain level of resource sharing? Secondly, with respect to the traditional territories that you referenced, is it clear where those territories are? Are there other First Nations who would say that they are part of their traditional territories? Is it black and white as to when a mineral or forestry operation would be in Batchewana's territory?

**Chief Dean Sayers:** It's clear. It's really clear in regard to the area that I believe each First Nation—and we have to also remember that we're all Anishinabek people, and we all have traditional relationships and protocols, but we've made assertions as individual First Nations to the Creator that we would look after certain areas and take primary responsibility for those areas. I think that's somewhat clear within the treaty of 1850, the Robinson-Huron treaty.

Also, in regard to the revenue-sharing process, there's an obligation that corporations are mandated to fulfill. I'm aware of a northern First Nation that had some revenue-sharing agreements or some kind of a mutual relationship with developers in diamond mining, and when the time came for the actual implementation, they just shrugged it off and never honoured it. So the enforcement, I believe, from somebody, the province—we have our own way of enforcement and we can do that as well, but we'd rather go through something that the province can encourage all development companies to embark on as part of a way of enforcing that.

I think the province should be more compelling for these development companies. They can tell them, "This is how you will interact with that First Nation. It's their territory, and you will give them a percentage." It has to be something that's going to benefit us, and we have to agree to that. Each First Nation will have a unique preferred relationship with a development company, whether they want to have employment or roads or infrastructure. But they should be compelled by the province to enter into some type of mutually benefiting relationship that's based on their own unique First Nation needs.

The general parameters that were set out by federal Supreme Court decisions around the obligation to consult are really general. We're having difficulty in the interpretation. We know, and we've always known, what a good relationship is with development companies, and we've had that.

Just recently, the Ministry of Natural Resources—we were working diligently with Brookfield Power to de-

velop this mutually benefiting relationship with another \$300 million worth of windmills, and we were progressing nicely. We were working toward the issuance of a work permit to see the meteorological data collection towers, which they need in order to study the wind for a year, and we were ready to give them that. We were working on a relationship, on how we'd work together, and the MNR, in their own wisdom, decided that the relationship wasn't productive. They issued the work permit and made a public press announcement that they were now ready to move forward with negotiations, and it's not even their territory. Brookfield was really upset about that, and we both corresponded with the ministry saying, "We are working on a relationship. Please, let us

work on this." Initially, we had said to the Ministry of Natural Resources that we didn't need their assistance anymore, that we would work on our relationship ourselves, but they wanted to get involved anyway, and it almost collapsed our discussions. It was really detrimental to the overall process. So I think there should be a better way of handling some of the issues around First Nations resource revenue sharing.

**The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy):** Thank you. The time for questioning has expired. We appreciate your presentation.

That concludes our hearings here in Sault Ste. Marie. We are adjourned.

*The committee adjourned at 1218.*







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