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Tuesday 25 November 2008

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Mardi 25 novembre 2008

**Standing Committee on
Estimates**

Ministry of Training,
Colleges and Universities

**Comité permanent des
budgets des dépenses**

Ministère de la Formation et des
Collèges et Universités

Chair: Tim Hudak
Clerk: Sylwia Przedziecki

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
ESTIMATESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES
BUDGETS DES DÉPENSES

Tuesday 25 November 2008

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*The committee met at 0902 in room 151.*MINISTRY OF TRAINING,
COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Good morning, everyone. I call the meeting to order.

Minister Milloy, welcome to the meeting—and all the staff from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. There's a total of three hours and 10 minutes remaining. When the committee was adjourned, the minister had just under 12 minutes left in the time available for his reply. Once the minister has concluded his reply, we will begin 20-minute rotations beginning with the official opposition, followed by the third party and then the government.

Minister, you have 12 minutes to complete your responses.

Hon. John Milloy: Thank you very much. To begin, when last we met, there were a number of questions that were put forward. I sort of look for your advice on this. We've been able to provide written responses to a number of them, not to all of them. I'm not sure: Do I simply table them with the clerk, then?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): I believe, Minister, that that would be the appropriate thing to do at this point.

Hon. John Milloy: Okay. So we have, as I say, not all, but we've endeavoured to get as much information as possible.

Mr. Chair, as you noted, I was completing a response when last we met. I just want to put a couple of points on the record as a follow-up to some of the discussion last time and some of the general discussion about my ministry and some of the programs that it's been offering.

One of the ones that I want to do—I just want to put this on the record, because I think sometimes there's a bit of confusion in terms of assistance for laid-off workers in the province. I think all of us are aware that there have been a significant number of layoffs. Over 200,000 is the figure that is cited in the media and reports. At the same time, our government in the March budget brought forward the Second Career strategy, which targeted 20,000. I think sometimes there's a bit of confusion relating the 20,000 to the 200,000, somehow suggesting that that's been the government's sole response. So what I wanted to do this morning is just take a minute or two to clear up

any confusion on that point in terms of the very serious issue of laid-off workers, because I think all members of the Legislature, no matter what side of the House they're on, recognize the seriousness of any layoff.

As of January 1, 2007, I think members are aware, we had the transfer through the labour market development agreement of the federal government training services to the province, which, combined with the provincial services, have come together in a network known as Employment Ontario. At the moment, there are 1,200 Employment Ontario service providers throughout the province. They tend to be represented by community agencies. Every member here would have those in their riding.

Those Employment Ontario offices offer services to about 900,000 people annually, so the starting point for any discussion about laid-off workers is Employment Ontario and the fact that they provide services not only to those workers who have been, unfortunately, involved in a layoff, but to anyone who comes forward who's looking for assistance. That assistance can have a wide range. It can involve everything from resumé writing and advice on job search all the way up to training, and that's the second point I wanted to make.

In terms of training that's available, there are a number of key programs. The major one is actually called the Ontario skills development program. That's a program that's open to individuals who are EI-eligible, who are looking for training to upgrade their skills and find a job. Since September 2007, almost 14,000 people have enrolled in the Ontario skills development program. In the past five months alone, close to 5,500 have enrolled in school through the Ontario skills development program. Since 2006, close to 37,000 people have been assisted through the Ontario skills development program.

As I say, when you start talking about the large number of layoffs and people who have come forward, not everyone is looking for training. Some people are looking for assistance in finding a job, for information about the job market, resumé writing, that sort of thing; some people are interested in training, and a lot of that core training happens through the Ontario skills development program.

That being said, the Ontario skills development program is not without its weaknesses. The primary weakness is the fact that it is limited to individuals pursuing courses which are going to result in them moving into the

labour force as quickly as possible. Mr. Chair, I think you'd agree there's nothing wrong with that, but there are individuals who would like to move on to a different career—a second career, as the saying goes—where they would like to take a longer-term training program, they would like to upgrade their skills and they would like to then move into an area where there is hiring going on.

Out of that came the birth of Second Career, which offers up to two-year training programs for individuals. They might take that through a community college or a private career college, the idea being that that would be offered for those individuals who are wanting to make a pretty major change, a significant change in their lives, which is why the target was set at 20,000: Because we recognize that many people who get laid off just want the initial supports—they may want short-term training—and there's only going to be a percentage who are willing to go back to school for longer-term training that's going to lead them to the job.

Second Career was born in the March budget. We worked on developing the program criteria in June; on June 1, it came into being. At the same time, we made a commitment that we were going to be monitoring it as it happened on an ongoing basis, and if there were obstacles to individuals who wanted to pursue this long-term training or ways that we could improve the program, we were not going to be shy about it. In fact, we weren't. We announced a series of changes a little while ago that came into effect November 10 to remove some of the obstacles and allow more people to come forward from Second Career.

I actually can share with the committee today, because the Second Career targets are a little bit of a moving target because obviously we get the results on an ongoing basis, that we've seen almost 1,800 people come forward to Second Career. About 1,200 are currently enrolled and over 600 more are pending approval, and that number, obviously, grows with each report we get back. So that gives you an overview of Employment Ontario's services. As I say, 900,000 people came forward—a whole variety and menu of services.

0910

I just wanted to correct, for the record, some of the confusion that may exist about Second Career and the relationship between Second Career and the number of laid-off workers in Ontario. So that's the first thing.

Mr. Chair, can I ask you how much time I have?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): You've got about just under five minutes, Minister.

Hon. John Milloy: Okay.

The second issue that I wanted to provide a little background on—and I'll give notice that some of the material I'm going to table with the committee today addresses this in some detail and provides some of the criteria—is the skills training infrastructure program, or the STIP program. There were some questions raised in last week's estimates committee regarding funding through STIP to training centres across the province. So I just wanted to provide the committee with some back-

ground. As I say, I'll also be providing some written material.

STIP was established to respond to a growing need for new and upgraded equipment to meet the skills training and apprenticeship needs of the economy. Funding allowed union-employer training centres to replace existing, or purchase additional or new, training equipment to expand skills training capacity. In the construction trades, approximately 20% of training is done at union-employer training centres. Overall, training centres train more than 7.5% of all apprentices and have allowed for greater training capacity in Ontario. I think it's important to recognize the contribution that these centres make in providing the skilled workforce in Ontario.

The STIP investment was available to all union, employer and union-employer training centres through two public and competitive calls for proposals. Contracts were awarded based on both eligibility criteria and weighted evaluation criteria.

Just to go through the process, the first call for proposals was May 4, 2007. The ministry received 58 proposals requesting a total of \$19 million; 53 projects at a value of \$16.9 million were approved. The second call for proposals was August 21, 2007. The ministry received 59 proposals requesting a total of \$18.3 million; 39 projects at a value of \$7.9 million were approved.

Contracts were awarded based on a competitive call for proposals that judged each proposal against both the eligibility criteria and weighted evaluation criteria. The delegation of authority to approve and award transfer payments was given to the deputy minister. All of the STIP contracts were approved by the deputy minister, based on the recommendations developed through the proposal assessment process.

In terms of eligibility requirements, there were three main eligibility requirements for the skills training infrastructure program. The first was the type of training entity. The skills training infrastructure program, as I noted, was available to union-employer training centres and/or mobile training units operated by union-employer training centres in Ontario. By "union-employer," we mean union training centres, employer training centres and partnered union-employer training centres.

There was a cost-sharing requirement. A contribution of 25% towards eligible costs was required by the proponents. In terms of eligible costs, it included the purchase of new or used equipment to update training capacity to industry standards and the associated direct cost with installation and delivery.

The ministry assessed all proposals submitted in both calls for proposals. This assessment was shared by the regional offices in the program development unit. The assessment focused on the viability of the proposal, whether the proposed equipment would increase or maximize training capacity, and whether the proposed equipment was up to industry standards and requirements.

Proposals were assessed against the weighted evaluation criteria, outlined in STIP guidelines and require-

ments. I'll give you the breakdown. The viability of the proposal was 20%. How the proposal would improve current training offerings and/or enable new training offerings was 15% of that; the capacity to support other costs related to the use of this equipment that are not eligible for STIP funding was 5%. The second was how the proposal supports industry requirements and builds capacity, and that was 50% of the evaluation.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Just a few seconds left.

Hon. John Milloy: Okay.

The project costs were 25% and the idea of partnership was 5%.

As I said, Mr. Chair, with your wise advice to hasten it, that gives you a bit of an overview and I'll be sharing with members more details on that. I think with that, I'm probably out of time, am I?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Yes, that's just right on. Perfect; thank you.

We'll now go to the official opposition. Mr. Shurman?

Mr. Peter Shurman: Good morning, Minister. I've noticed that in the line pertaining to post-secondary education, the lion's share of your ministry's budget, \$5.2 billion is allocated. I know we can agree that value for money for Ontarians is at the nub of this.

My interest here is York University and the current situation and, flowing from that, other contracts with the same CUPE union that are aligned to expire in 2010 in a number of Ontario universities. I wonder if you can comment on the fact that the union demands amount to approximately 11% of York University's operating budget, and I want to know why you're standing by, in this particular case, being in the fourth week, as CUPE 3903 continues in its efforts to basically bleed this university dry.

Hon. John Milloy: I think, Mr. Shurman, you recognize the fact that our university system is made up of a network of autonomous institutions and, although the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities provides significant funding to these institutions, how they organize their labour relations issues around contracts, etc., is left entirely to their purview, as they are autonomous. That being said, of course, we're always very concerned when there's a strike at an institution. I continue to call on, as does the Premier and every member of the cabinet, both sides to come to the table and reach an agreement that's in the best interests of the students.

I do not, as minister, have any direct authority over the negotiations or what's happening at York University. That being said, the government, of course, has a responsibility in terms of labour relations—which is my colleague the Minister of Labour. I know that in the House, and to the media, he has spoken about some of the supports that are in place from the province to try to mediate these situations and try to support both sides in coming to the table.

Certainly, I share your concern in the sense that no one wants to see this strike happening and, as I say, we'd like to see it resolved as quickly as possible.

Mr. Peter Shurman: We can agree on that. Here's where I'm going with this, Minister, and I'm quite sure that between yourself and the Minister of Labour, you've had conversations about this. Of 18 Ontario universities, nine now have contracts with CUPE at the TA and GA level that will expire in 2010; five, including York, are in negotiation over contracts that are in the process of expiring with a view to aligning them for 2010, which would mean, if CUPE got its way, we would have 14 of 18 Ontario universities with concurrently expiring contracts. I think we can leave to our imaginations what could happen in 2010. Right now—and many of these people live in my riding, so I am acutely aware—50,000 are affected at York, but we could be talking about hundreds of thousands over the course of the next couple of years. Are you aware that that's the situation and are you addressing this on a more global scale?

Hon. John Milloy: Again, I think everybody is concerned whenever there is a work disruption of any type, especially one that affects students. As you point out, York University is one of the largest universities in the province, and we are encouraging both sides to come to the table.

At the same time, I know there are ongoing negotiations across the province in terms of discussions; this happens on a regular basis. We have, unfortunately, seen some disruptions at Windsor earlier this year and Wilfrid Laurier University. We try to encourage both sides to come to the table and move forward but, at the same time, I, as minister, have to respect the autonomy of these institutions. That is the way the system has developed. We do not negotiate directly with unions. In a sense, we're not involved in the relationship between the administration and the staff in an instance like this. As I say, we fund them a considerable amount of money and they also have other sources of funding, and, at the end of the day, they're autonomous institutions. So although I appreciate your question, I think that within the parameters of the way the system is set up, our authority as the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities is certainly to make sure that there's ongoing funding to our institutions, but at the end, we can encourage them to resolve issues like this, but we have to respect their autonomy.

0920

Mr. Peter Shurman: We've got two problems here at York, and I don't think that York is ultimately going to be unique.

One aspect of this is that the university, which is, as you correctly point out, autonomous, has said, "Let's get this settled and do it by arbitration. We're prepared to sit down." The union, at this point, unless something has happened in the last hour or two, is balking at that.

Also, if you go beneath the surface, you discover that the demand of 11% over two years masks the fact that the TAs and GAs in this case, and, I imagine, by connection, in other cases, are looking for free tuition as part of their wage and benefits package. If you take a look at the costs if that were granted, we're talking about 112% over two

years. Your ministry can't afford that; the people of Ontario can't afford that; and certainly if students are ultimately asked to bear the burden, they can't afford that.

So I'm having a hard time understanding why we continue to hear that this is an autonomous situation, when I think, obviously, the university is reaching out and saying, "Help."

Hon. John Milloy: I think you would respect the fact that in any labour negotiation, the role of the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities is to respect the autonomy of this situation and to encourage both sides to come to the table and have an agreement. But I think for me to comment, as I think you're asking me to, as to what's on the table and what one side should do or another side should do would be highly inappropriate.

The main spokesperson for the government in terms of a labour situation where there is a dispute or a strike is the Minister of Labour. I'm not trying to dismiss your concerns in any way, but I think you'll appreciate that I'm limited in any comment that I could make on the specifics. When it comes to the actual strike and moving forward, it would be more appropriate for me to defer to my colleague the Minister of Labour.

Mr. Peter Shurman: But why aren't you talking to the Minister of Labour? How many more days are we going to go before we wind up with a jeopardy situation for 50,000 students? From my riding of Thornhill you can basically throw stones into York University, so we've got thousands of staff and students in my riding who are really pummelling me on this particular issue. It's why I came to the estimates committee. And I'm concerned for the future with regard to what's going to happen in other institutions.

While I look at something that you just said a moment ago, I also look at a quote of yours on November 7, when you said, "I respect the autonomy of the institutions when it comes to our universities." I wonder how you feel you're respecting the autonomy of the institutions if you don't step in to prevent a coalition that's going to hold us all hostage in 2010?

Hon. John Milloy: I appreciate the concerns you have, I appreciate the concerns of your constituents, I appreciate the concerns of the students. Again, we encourage and I encourage, as minister, and the government encourages both sides to come forward and reach a settlement as quickly as possible.

Beyond that, as I say, you're moving into territory which is held by my colleague the Minister of Labour. He could talk about the government supports that are in place to help in any dispute situation.

Mr. Peter Shurman: Minister, you sit at the same cabinet table as the Minister of Labour. Have you not had any conversations about this? This is a serious situation at York, and threatening to be a hugely serious situation in the province.

Hon. John Milloy: At the same time, I think you have to respect my position that to comment publicly on—you outlined some of the reports of what's being negotiated,

what's on the table, what one side is saying about the other side. I think you would recognize that it would be inappropriate for me, as Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, to be commenting publicly on that. The spokesperson for the government in terms of labour disputes and strikes is the Minister of Labour, so I'm going to defer to him insofar as the comments that I've made this morning.

Mr. Peter Shurman: I'll close with this comment, Minister: What I think is most inappropriate, with all due respect, is that we have 50,000 young people worrying about what's going to happen to their year.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Mr. Hudak, you have 10 minutes left.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Terrific. Thank you very much, Minister and Deputy. Might I ask, Minister, if you have somebody here who has oversight to the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board, and if they could maybe come up to the front. It's just that I have a couple of detailed questions that probably would be best responded to by one of the civil servants.

Ms. Patti Redmond: My name is Patti Redmond. I'm the acting assistant deputy minister of the strategic policy and programs division.

Mr. Tim Hudak: ADM Redmond, if I could, PEQAB was created in?

Ms. Patti Redmond: I believe it was created in 2001.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Basically, PEQAB will review private degree-granting institutions, out-of-province institutions and such, and make recommendations or decisions on whether they could qualify to grant degrees in Ontario?

Ms. Patti Redmond: They would make recommendations.

Mr. Tim Hudak: How many have been granted that authority since it was created in 2001 or so?

Ms. Patti Redmond: I'm sorry, I don't have that information here, but I would be happy to provide that.

Mr. Tim Hudak: No problem. I'd appreciate that, because such a thing may not be readily at hand.

But, Chair, if I could ask, through you, for a list of the schools that have been granted that authority since 2001.

The minister has an ability to veto the decisions of PEQAB?

Hon. John Milloy: I would characterize it differently. The PEQAB makes recommendations to the minister.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Okay.

Hon. John Milloy: So it's not a veto in the sense of what PEQAB says stands unless the minister does otherwise. PEQAB sends recommendations to the minister, and the minister makes considerations.

Mr. Tim Hudak: So does the minister typically, then, accept the recommendations of PEQAB?

Hon. John Milloy: It would depend.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Okay. So we have some highly qualified individuals who are paid—the total cost for PEQAB is almost \$700,000 per year. They make recommendations.

If I could also just—to ADM Redmond—have a list of the individuals who have been denied, who have been recommended by PEQAB, and then maybe you could divide up in terms of those who had been then granted the degree-granting authority and those who had been denied such.

Minister, have you faced this?

And thank you.

Ms. Patti Redmond: Okay.

Mr. Tim Hudak: You said “acting,” but I’m confident it’s just a matter of time.

Hon. John Milloy: You’re a charmer, Mr. Hudak.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Minister, have you had a chance to make decisions on PEQAB’s recommendations in your time as minister?

Hon. John Milloy: Yes, I have.

Mr. Tim Hudak: And have you accepted PEQAB’s recommendations?

Hon. John Milloy: Yes. I should note that as well as private institutions there are also applied degrees that come forward from community colleges.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Can you give me some examples of private institutions that have degree-granting ability in the province that are not publicly assisted?

Hon. John Milloy: Can I call on—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): If you can just give us your name, please.

Ms. Shamira Madhany: My name is Shamira Madhany and I am the director of the post-secondary accountability branch.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Terrific.

Ms. Shamira Madhany: Examples of some institutions that have received approval for private degree-granting in Ontario: Charles Sturt University in Australia—

Mr. Tim Hudak: I’m sorry; I missed the first one.

Ms. Shamira Madhany: Charles Sturt—Niagara College and Redeemer college. Those are the three that come to mind immediately.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Is there an education program from Niagara University?

Ms. Shamira Madhany: Yes, it’s a teacher education program.

Mr. Tim Hudak: At Niagara University from Lewiston, New York, I think?

Ms. Shamira Madhany: Yes.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Help me understand something too. Let me go back to the PEQAB for a second. Under what grounds, Minister, would the minister not take the advice of PEQAB and, in fact, overrule them?

Hon. John Milloy: Those grounds would be public policy grounds. Anticipating, perhaps, where some of your questioning is going, there was a review by my predecessor to perhaps find a little bit more definition for the PEQAB process. Certainly, we’re taking a look at it because I think—as I say, perhaps anticipating some of your comments, there is no firm criteria that would go out, but they would be public policy grounds.

0930

Mr. Tim Hudak: Wasn’t Minister Bentley the first minister to actually veto recommendations by PEQAB?

Hon. John Milloy: I don’t have that information.

Mr. Tim Hudak: But you’ve accepted all of their recommendations to date.

Hon. John Milloy: Yes. I’ve received several from community colleges that have been approved. I have not vetoed any. I apologize, Mr. Chair: I’m using the term—I should have said that I have not rejected any.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I think it’s appropriate.

Do you have confidence in the individuals who staff and are appointed to PEQAB?

Hon. John Milloy: I have confidence that the individuals at PEQAB do one aspect of a technical assessment. They’re not asked to look at broader criteria. For example, if an institution came forward and wanted to offer a program that was offered widely throughout the province and there were available spaces everywhere, for example, and at the same time it was in a profession or an area where there was an oversupply, PEQAB doesn’t make any judgment on that. It’s done on a technical basis.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Maybe I could add, Chair, to my request about any that have been recommended by PEQAB but vetoed by the minister of the day, the grounds for the exercise of that veto.

Minister, as you’d said in your comments, you’re bringing in a new textbook and technology grant. If I have a student in my riding who goes to Brock University for her education degree, she would be eligible for the textbook and technology grant, just by way of example. But if she chose to go to Niagara University’s new program in the Hamilton or Burlington area, I believe, or Redeemer college’s education program, she would not be eligible. Why are you making that decision?

Hon. John Milloy: As I think you appreciate, every program has parameters around it. We made a decision for public colleges and universities. That was the limitation on the program.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Let me understand: If she graduates from Redeemer’s program or Niagara University’s program, she could teach at a local Catholic or public high school. They’re fully qualified. She could also receive OSAP grants to go to those schools. If she’s eligible for OSAP, why can’t she get the textbook grant?

Hon. John Milloy: As I said, Mr. Hudak, there had to be parameters around it. It was decided that the program was best suited to go to the system of public universities and colleges. There are at the same time private career colleges you could also raise, where people could study. I mean, there were parameters set out.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I don’t understand the parameters. Let’s give an example: A single mother in my riding who wants to work her way back into the workforce, wants to be a teacher and help out other kids, makes a choice to go to Niagara University’s program or Redeemer’s program. She goes to apply for the textbook grant and can’t receive

it. Under what grounds do you make the decision for her that she can't get this when she could get OSAP? If you allow for OSAP to go to either school, please help me understand why she couldn't for these other programs.

Hon. John Milloy: As I say, every program has to have certain parameters—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Just two minutes on this particular round.

Hon. John Milloy: You could make an argument about part-time students. We focused in on full-time students at the network of colleges and universities where the bulk of students in the province go.

Mr. Tim Hudak: But I don't understand. For OSAP, you don't make a choice. You say that whether it's a public place—university or college—or not, OSAP is fully available. The Aiming for the Top scholarships, which the previous PC government brought in, were portable; the students could choose to go to any school. You have basically made an ideological decision, haven't you, to not allow the single mother to get the technology or textbook grant if she chose to go to Niagara University's program instead of the one at Brock University?

Hon. John Milloy: Again, I think you recognize that every program has limitations in terms of resources available, so there have to be parameters placed around it. This goes to full-time students in the network of community colleges and universities.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Under OSAP funding, there are grants, loans and scholarships, like the Aiming for the Top scholarship, that are fully portable. You basically allow the student to make her choice as to what school she wants to attend. But I believe work-studies are only available at publicly assisted universities. Is that true? How do you justify that three quarters of OSAP funding is portable and only one quarter is based on some sort of ideology?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Just clean it up quickly in 30 seconds.

Hon. John Milloy: On the work-study, is that Richard or is that—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Maybe just a quick response, if you could, please.

Mr. Richard Jackson: My name is Richard Jackson, and I'm the director of the student support branch. Mr. Hudak, the Ontario work-study program, as you indicated, is restricted to students at publicly funded colleges and universities in Ontario.

Mr. Tim Hudak: The question was why, though?

Hon. John Milloy: You asked the question of whether it was, and I wanted to confirm with Mr. Jackson. Again, these programs have parameters around them. We're limited in the sense of resources, so the support goes to the network of community colleges and universities where we're focusing these resources.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Do you think that's right?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Okay. We'll move on now to the third party. Mr. Marchese, please.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Good morning, Minister.

Hon. John Milloy: Good morning.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I just want to get back to some of the things I asked you last week and then move on to five pages of questions I have and do that as quickly as I can.

With respect to ranking around tuition fees, you might recall that at the end I said I had information that Statscan released something on the ranking that you and your staff were not aware of, or thought the last one was 2005. Did you get a chance to see it, you or Madame Fougère or others?

Hon. John Milloy: Barry? Sorry, Mr. Marchese.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: It's not a problem. It's okay. I don't expect you to have all the knowledge.

Hon. John Milloy: Thank goodness.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Otherwise you'd be divine. That would not be possible.

Hon. John Milloy: That's the next estimates, the big estimates in the sky, right?

Mr. Barry McCartan: Barry McCartan, director of the post-secondary finance information management branch. Yes, we are aware of that study.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Okay. Last week, were we aware of that study?

Mr. Barry McCartan: Last week we were not aware of that study in the sense that I didn't see the notes.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: So we're aware now?

Mr. Barry McCartan: Well, we do have a standard comparison of tuition fees under provincial.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: And that Statscan information confirms what I was saying; that is, as it relates to average undergraduate tuition fees for Canadian full-time students, we are the second-highest.

Mr. Barry McCartan: Correct.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: And the one that is ahead of us, for now at least, is Nova Scotia.

Mr. Barry McCartan: Correct.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: And in average graduate tuition fees for Canadian full-time students, we are numero uno. In Ontario, in 2007-08 it's \$8,486, in 2008-09 it's \$8,797. In second place is Nova Scotia, with \$7,242. In third place is British Columbia, with \$6,508.

Mr. Barry McCartan: Sorry. Are you citing the per capita comparisons?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: No, this is still tuition fees.

Mr. Barry McCartan: Thank you. I just wanted to be sure I'm clear.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I just wanted that we are on the same page on this.

Mr. Barry McCartan: It's a matter of public record.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Well, it's common now, yes, once we confirm it. I agree.

With respect to per capita, we had a difficult time with that one as well. I just want to refer to two documents—I would think you would say that these organizations have integrity and some research capability. I'm referring to the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations. This was released March 25, 2008, and they say, "Just as in 2003, Ontario ranks last in Canada in funding of universities, per capita." The other document, by the

Council of Ontario Universities, says, “Ontario is still last in funding in Canada on a per capita basis, with operating grants per student of \$6,052 versus a Canadian average of \$8,500.” That’s July 2008. Would you say that these numbers are accurate?

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Mr. Barry McCartan: They are accurate at the moment in time at which they’re done. It all depends on what year this information is based on. Both the OCUFA and the COU information is publicly available. We work with that information and we analyze it, just as they do our information. The COU information is lagged several years and the OCUFA information is not current, because we all use pretty much the same data sources for this comparison. In fact, after your question at the last meeting, we went back—per capita is but one indicator and not necessarily always the best one; I think per student funding is a little more relevant in many cases—and, using the census data and the 2006-07 reports from university financial officers, which are just available, we’ve actually been able to go into a new comparison, which shows Ontario is now seventh out of 10, where in the previous two-year ranking it was ninth.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Can I ask you, first of all, is this new comparison that you’ve done available to us?

Mr. Barry McCartan: We can make that available to committee, absolutely.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I’d appreciate that, because I’d like to know where you got your numbers and so on.

Mr. Barry McCartan: Absolutely.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: In terms of how you produce per capita numbers, as far as I know, to do a per capita calculation, you need the figure from operating grant and the figure of the general population.

Mr. Barry McCartan: Correct.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: And that’s what you used for your new information that you have for us?

Mr. Barry McCartan: Yes.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: And that’s up to date?

Mr. Barry McCartan: Yes.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: So the Council of Ontario Universities’ information lags by—what did you say?

Mr. Barry McCartan: They had a 2004-05 comparison in their last public document that we’ve seen; that is, their 2007 resource document references 2004-05 data. That’s the most recent one I’m aware of from them.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: And OCUFA, the same business?

Mr. Barry McCartan: I don’t know their reference data. I’ll have to get back to you on that.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: All right. So you’ll be able to submit that information of how you calculated your numbers?

Mr. Barry McCartan: Correct.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Okay. We’ll look at that and we’ll come back to you another time. Is that available soon?

Mr. Barry McCartan: I’ll undertake to get it to the committee—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Before we get back this afternoon so we can have a chance to see it and maybe ask a question or two?

Hon. John Milloy: We’ll see what we can do. We’ll work as fast as we can.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I’m sure that miracles are possible in this regard, because the information’s there, I’m assuming.

I was asking you questions last week about your contribution versus the federal government’s contribution. I was asking you to give us the percentage amount, and we had a difficult time with that. You said I had to go ask the minister or you had to ask the Minister of Finance in terms of how much money’s flowing. I want to refer you to a document by OCUFA again—thank you for that information—where they talk about the Canada social transfer and funding for post-secondary education: “The second change was for the federal government to earmark a portion of the CST,” the Canada social transfer, “for PSE,” post-secondary education. “In addition, \$800 million for PSE was added to the 2008-09 federal transfer.”

They say on the next page, “If the increase in federal funding for the PSE is to be ‘passed through’ by the Ontario government to colleges and universities, without any being diverted for other uses from general revenue, the increase in funding above that already committed under Reaching Higher is estimated to be between \$480 and \$490 million for 2008-09. The minimum to be expected would be \$400 million, as outlined in the Canada-Ontario agreement (since superseded by the changes to the CST).”

“In the run-up to the 2007 provincial election, the Liberals assured OCUFA that all additional federal funding for PSE would be added to the funds committed under Reaching Higher.”

Given what they say, do you have any clearer thoughts about what the federal contribution is to the PSE?

Hon. John Milloy: Some of the challenge last week in terms of the questions is that you asked about federal contributions to my ministry for post-secondary education. Obviously, there’s a relationship with the federal government in terms of the training side, but revenues for post-secondary education come from the Ministry of Finance, which, in turn, has a variety of revenue sources, one of them being transfers from the federal government. One of those transfers is the CST, which goes to support our government’s operations in a variety of areas, and decisions are made on how that money is allocated. It goes into the pot, so to speak, and then decisions are made.

What I was suggesting last week is that this particular financial relationship with the federal government—decisions are made about various transfers. As I suggested, the Minister of Finance was here for a number of days. But we receive CST money and decisions are made by the government on changes going forward. I can refer you to the March budget, where we saw a huge increase in terms of post-secondary education—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Minister, that's not helping me. I read into the record what OCUFA said about federal transfer dollars, and I was hoping I might get some clarity about what your contribution is versus the federal government's contribution to post-secondary education. I was hoping for a percentage amount. I'm not going to get it; is that correct?

Hon. John Milloy: As I say, the federal government does not fund post-secondary education directly. A series of transfers come through—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I know that.

Hon. John Milloy: —and then I receive my budget. As I say, you can see significant increases, both through Reaching Higher and also through some of the money contained in the budget.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Thank you, Minister. We're not getting anywhere. I just thought I'd put that on the record so those watching or following Hansard would have a good sense of where we're going with this, how much money we were expecting from the federal dollars to transfer immediately to your ministry. I put that on the record, so it's enough; I don't think we need any more.

Hon. John Milloy: And we did endeavour last week that we would get you an answer, because I believe we had hit a bit of a rut in the road and weren't moving forward.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: You want to be helpful. I know.

Other questions: Under the current Ontario Works program, any loans taken from OSAP results in the reduction or loss of Ontario Works payments. This can force parents to have to choose between just making ends meet or being able to attend post-secondary education. Is your ministry or your government doing anything to remedy that particular problem?

Hon. John Milloy: I'm sorry, I'm not—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Under the current Ontario—

Hon. John Milloy: I know. There are a couple of different issues, and I just want to make sure I understand the issue you're raising here. Sorry.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Under the current Ontario Works program, any loans taken from OSAP results in the reduction or loss of Ontario Works payments, and that makes it harder on students. I'm just wondering whether you or the deputy have any comment on how you're dealing with that.

Hon. John Milloy: My understanding of Ontario Works—and I can call on either the deputy or Mr. Jackson to explain—is that there is a protocol in place, and when one goes on OSAP, one leaves Ontario Works. But I'll ask Mr. Jackson to explain.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Mr. Jackson, maybe you can confirm what I'm saying: Under the current Ontario Works program, any loans taken from OSAP results in the reduction or loss of Ontario Works payments. Are you aware of that?

Mr. Richard Jackson: I'd like to correctly explain what is actually happening. You've got it partly correct. In terms of what we refer to in the world of social

assistance as a dependent adult, that is, for social assistance purposes, an individual dependent on their parent, should they apply for and receive OSAP assistance, the portion of the OSAP assistance that is allocated for living allowance, not direct educational costs—so the portion for tuition, books, transportation and child care—has no impact on the dependent adult's parent's Ontario Works benefits. However, if a living allowance is being provided by the student assistance program, that is taken into consideration when the Ministry of Community and Social Services calculates Ontario Works entitlements.

Hon. John Milloy: If I may, Mr. Marchese, I believe your question was about someone on Ontario Works who wants to go back to post-secondary education and applies for OSAP. Mr. Jackson, I think there's a more detailed response—if that's okay, Mr. Marchese?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Yes.

Hon. John Milloy: I believe they leave Ontario Works, do they not?

Mr. Richard Jackson: Yes. If the individual is receiving Ontario Works and elects to pursue post-secondary studies, that individual is required to access assistance through the student assistance program.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Okay. It's probably a little more complicated than that in terms of question and answer on this, but I heard the answer you gave, Mr. Jackson. I'll review it in Hansard and we'll see where we go with that information, and maybe we'll get back to you another time. Thank you.

The loan repayment is meant to begin six months after graduation. However, students are telling us that during the so-called interest-free six-month grace period, the government actually stops subsidizing the interest on student loans immediately after the student leaves their studies, meaning interest begins to accrue in those six months. We've heard this to be the case. Can you confirm this?

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Hon. John Milloy: Sorry, I'll call back Mr. Jackson, and I'm going to look to him for technical approbation, but my understanding is that, yes, interest begins accruing when a student completes their studies. That six-month grace period involves repayment of the loan; it is not an interest-free grace period.

Mr. Jackson, I'll ask you to confirm or tell me I'm not up to speed on this.

Mr. Richard Jackson: Mr. Milloy, you are indeed up to speed on that. That is the correct answer, and that is the case for both federal and provincial student loans.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: What we've heard is that some students start paying interest right away, not after the six-month grace period. Is it true? Is it happening? We hear that it's happening. Are you saying it's not?

Hon. John Milloy: No, we're saying that the six-month grace period involves beginning your loan repayment schedule. It does not involve a suspension of the interest. You finish your studies, you have accumulated a loan, in the example you put forward, and interest starts right away. You have six months, though, before you

begin your payment schedule. That being said, for students who are—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Sorry, just to be clear: As soon as you're out of school, you start paying interest right away?

Hon. John Milloy: I shouldn't say "paying"; the interest begins to accumulate on your loan. Again, I'll ask Mr. Jackson to provide any clarification.

Mr. Richard Jackson: While students are enrolled in full-time post-secondary studies, both the governments of Ontario and the governments of Canada pay the interest on those loans on behalf of the student loan borrower.

During the six-month period after the cessation of full-time studies, interest does accrue on both the federal and provincial student loans. At the time that loan enters into repayment, which is six months after the completion of full-time studies, the borrower has the option to make either a one-time lump sum payment against that capitalized interest, or have that capitalized interest added to their student loan debt and they would repay it over the course of the duration of their student loan repayment.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Just specific to that period—and I don't need to know the technicalities, because your language can be technical—I understood you to say that the interest does start right away, once you leave university.

Mr. Richard Jackson: The interest starts—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Right away. There's no six-month period. There's no grace.

Mr. Richard Jackson: No payments are required during this—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: No payments, but there is interest immediately.

Mr. Richard Jackson: Correct.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: So there is no six-month grace period, really.

Hon. John Milloy: There's a six-month grace period in terms of repayment.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: But interest does accumulate right away.

Hon. John Milloy: Yes, during that period. At the same time, there are, as you know, programs available to students who are having problems—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: That's fine.

I have a question about tuition fees and ancillary fees. Students in Ontario contribute 45% of university operating budgets through fees. In contrast, students in the other nine provinces contribute approximately 29% of university operating budgets through fees. How do you feel about that?

Hon. John Milloy: We'll just confirm.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Yes, please.

Hon. John Milloy: Again, I say with the greatest respect, there are different figures that are put out by different groups, all in good faith; comparisons of apples and oranges—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: But he's got the right numbers, correct?

Hon. John Milloy: I think he's going to check on the right numbers. You want to confirm them.

Mr. Barry McCartan: We should come back to the committee this afternoon. The minister is correct: There are many interprovincial comparisons on this issue. Typically, Ontario is not that far off of most other provinces. But let's—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: But you do have numbers. Is that correct?

Mr. Barry McCartan: I believe we do. We'll go back to staff and check.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: If it's available this afternoon, that would be great; if not, we'll have to request it, I guess, for the long haul.

We also wanted to ask you, what is the breakdown, by institution, of the percentage amount by which tuition fees have increased from last year to the current year?

Hon. John Milloy: We'll endeavour—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I'll just put it—

Hon. John Milloy: This will all be on the record.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Put it on the record, exactly. What are the current ancillary fees for each institution—colleges and universities? What is the breakdown by institution of the percentage amount by which ancillary fees have increased from last year to the current year? What are the international student tuition fees for each institution for the current year? What is the current total debt of Ontario's students? What is the average debt of students who have OSAP?

We'll leave it at that for questions.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Okay. So you can get those questions answered, Minister, for Mr. Marchese.

Hon. John Milloy: Yes. And again, Mr. Chair, as I indicated, I will be—I think we break in a few minutes and we'll certainly make sure the answers that we have from last week are brought forward.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): We have a total of about half an hour remaining this morning. So I'll now go over to the government members, Mr. Moridi, and then the official opposition will have about 10 minutes after that before the bells ring, okay?

Mr. Reza Moridi: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and good morning, Mr. Minister.

Hon. John Milloy: Good morning.

Mr. Reza Moridi: Recently, I watched CBC's The National's special feature report—Hard Times Hard Choices. It outlined many of the economic challenges facing Canada today and it focused particularly on the challenges to the auto sector.

We know the economic situation around the world is in a period of transition and that a lot of factors affecting Ontario's economy are really beyond the government's control to fix. The crisis in the US banking industry is one of those factors. The serious financial situation of US-based auto companies is another. It was really disheartening to see the Big Three auto makers appealing to the US government for financial assistance.

Minister, all of this has a very real impact on the people of Ontario. Our citizens rely heavily on the auto sector for manufacturing jobs and for thousands of spinoff jobs that are created to serve and supply the auto industry across the province. We are seeing many layoffs in Ontario as a result, and this is creating financial challenges for families across the province.

The CBC program I mentioned took a look at the Ford plant in Windsor, and at what people who have lost their jobs are doing to cope. It was great to see that. The program talked to people at the Ford Workers Adjustment Centre. This centre was set up in conjunction with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. It's what you call an action centre, and it's a place where laid-off people can get help to get into a training program or get career counselling. All of the career-related programs the government offers through Employment Ontario are available at this one Ford Workers Adjustment Centre.

It was great to see that some of the laid-off workers at Ford are today back in the classroom building a new career in areas like woodworking, health care and construction. Many of these workers are participating in our new program Second Career, and the chance to go back to school and learn new skills for a new job is bringing them hope.

Minister, I know Second Career is one of our government's initiatives to help laid-off workers. My question is, what other assistance are we providing to these workers? What help is available for people who need a job?

Hon. John Milloy: I thank you very much, Mr. Moridi, for your question. You tie, very clearly, the work of my ministry to the economy and to the economic challenges that are happening in the province. Of course, we need to address the economic challenges on two levels. The first is, we have to deal with the fallout of the international financial situation, which, as you rightly point out, is having a huge impact on our manufacturing sector, particularly in the auto sector. We have to deal with the immediate effects of that in terms of workers who are laid off and, at the same time, continue to prepare the Ontario economy to not only weather the storm, but emerge from the storm stronger than ever. I think all of us recognize that, with the changing world situation, with globalization, etc., no longer can we look at the whole idea of competing on the basis of a low-wage economy. When you look at some of the competition we have around, the only way we are going to continue to prosper is to make sure that we have the most highly trained, highly skilled and highly knowledgeable workforce, and that means attacking the problem at all levels.

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In terms of post-secondary education, we've talked about that and those investments, everything from undergrad through graduate studies, the important work that goes on in our community colleges, and issues around training and retraining.

I want to pick up on that aspect of your question and the whole notion of an action centre.

Certainly, as minister, I've had the privilege of visiting a number of action centres across the province, including the one that you specifically referenced in Windsor. Surprisingly, I think it's a very uplifting experience to visit an action centre. I must admit, as an MPP, before I was minister, I had a chance to attend the opening of an action centre. I went there, I'll admit quite openly, with a little bit of fear that I was going to a factory situation where you'd have individuals who had lost their jobs and that it would be a very stressful experience.

Although I don't want in any way to take away from the pain that the people were going through in terms of the job loss, the whole idea of an action centre is really a chance to add to the Employment Ontario network that I spoke about in my opening comments. It's a chance to bring together partners: oftentimes the employer, the union that's involved, community members. It is a physical location where supports are offered to individuals who have been laid off from a particular setting. In most cases, the ones I visited are factory settings, many of them linked into the auto sector. Funding for these centres, again, is done on a partnership basis, and TCU makes fairly significant investments in establishing them.

The key idea of the centre is pure support. It's the idea that many of the people who work at the centre and volunteer at the centre are from that factory where the layoff has taken place and they're able to offer their colleagues some personal support. They're friends. They know each other. They can come through. Many of them are in the same boat. They can trade ideas and best practices. They can talk about areas in the local community where there is hiring, exchange information on leads that might be going forward. At the same time, on a more formal level, they can link into the system of Employment Ontario services.

As I say, I've visited a number of them. I've visited a number of openings, and I always point out that when a politician comes to an opening it's usually a time of celebration. Although, again, I always acknowledge and recognize the seriousness of the situation and extend my sympathies, I also think that there are things that we can celebrate in terms of action centres, in terms of the collegiality that goes on and the support that goes on; also, the fact that the community is often involved. Certainly, with openings, you'll see the local mayor, councillors and that sort of thing coming forward.

I think many of the workers who have been laid off don't realize that they have a set of skills that may not be as immediately apparent to them. They've worked in one function, perhaps for many years, and they don't realize that there are skills that they've developed which are transferable to other areas. That's where the whole idea of Employment Ontario comes in.

As I said at the beginning, unfortunately sometimes there's a bit of confusion—that Second Career becomes Employment Ontario, when in fact Employment Ontario is much broader. First of all, it starts with the whole idea of assessing an individual, finding out what their skills are, oftentimes helping them discover a whole range of

skills they didn't realize were there, helping them with their job search, with job matching, helping them with resumé writing, interview skills, access to job banks, job clubs, career fairs, that sort of thing, and then at the same time assessing an individual and indicating whether that person wants to go on for training that might be on a short-term basis, through the skills development program, or on a long-term basis, through Second Career.

Certainly, the work that's done in action centres in shepherding people through the process, in offering them support and offering them that advice, is invaluable.

At the same time, action centres can access different funds to work on individual training programs for some of their workers. At the one that I visited in Ford, I met a number of individuals who were I believe in a heavy equipment program and were extremely enthusiastic. They were moving forward to careers at the end of this and they really had a new lease on life. There's been work that has been done with community colleges. Again in the Windsor area, the particular Ford plant you speak about worked with St. Clair College to take individuals who had certain skills from the line which could be translated into an area of mechanics where there was a real demand in the community. They were able to be fast-tracked—if I can use the term—through the program and came out at the end with jobs waiting for them.

I think the whole idea of an action centre as an important entry point for a layoff situation, many of them related to the auto sector, is really a chance to give people that boost and the support they need. Again, we're dealing with individuals, and I think all of us can recognize the psychology of the situation: Someone has lost their job, someone has been in a situation for many years, and they need that support and encouragement really to examine other alternatives, to examine, as the program connotes, the possibility of going forward to a second career.

Mr. Reza Moridi: My second question to the minister relates to my riding of Richmond Hill. Minister, my riding of Richmond Hill has experienced significant growth in population and many other aspects. According to Statistics Canada, the town of Richmond Hill has seen their population grow by 30,000, or 23%, from 2001 to 2006, just over five years, and the York region population also had a growth of 22%. When you compare this with the province's growth rate, which is 6.6%, it's quite significant. Many people move to York region from other parts of the country and the province. Many newcomers choose to settle in this region of Ontario. They choose this region for its good public education and the health system as well as proximity to Toronto. Many people choose to create the headquarters for their businesses in York region and Richmond Hill because of the strategic location from a business point of view.

My question to the minister is, facing the growth of population, what action has the ministry taken to help those growing numbers of young people of York region who will access post-secondary education? What is the level of post-secondary education in Ontario compared

with other jurisdictions in the G8 countries? What will the ministry plan to do next regarding accessibility?

Hon. John Milloy: I appreciate the question, and certainly the trend that you're speaking about is one that we should celebrate. I think I mentioned in my opening comments last week that there have been about 100,000 additional students in Ontario's colleges and universities since 2002-03. I think even the most hardened observer would have to applaud the success of Reaching Higher in terms of welcoming more young people into our colleges and universities. In fact I believe, in terms of the G8, which you mentioned, we have one of the highest levels of post-secondary participation in the world, something we should be very proud of. We've provided a series of supports to increase this growth through the Reaching Higher plan. All told, over the five years it will provide an additional \$6.2 billion to the post-secondary education system by 2009-10, which is the most significant investment in 40 years.

The focus hasn't simply been at the undergraduate level. We've also recognized the importance of graduate education. One of the creative things we've done is that we've worked with the sector to have them identify their interest and their capacity in terms of graduate spots, and our target has been to increase access to graduate education by creating 14,000 additional graduate student spaces by 2009-10. What that means is asking, if I can use this term, for a request for proposals, where an institution comes forward and says, "We're interested in taking this number of master's spots or this number of PhD spots."

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We've certainly seen a great deal of interest on the part of the institutions and, I think, appreciation that we can work together and establish those targets. The institutions have been very open to the idea of being held accountable, so we can go back and take a look at how they're doing in terms of meeting the enrolment data, because the postgraduate level is so important, to go back to my earlier comments, in terms of Ontario's success in moving forward.

You talked about projected enrolment over the next few years, particularly in the GTA. I think all of us recognize some of the employment growth you're speaking of. At the same time, I think people also recognize the participation rates and the fact that we're seeing more people looking at colleges and universities as an option, moving forward. We certainly anticipate this growth to continue, and we encourage this growth.

As you know, part of our ministry's strategy is to reach out to underrepresented groups. I spoke a little bit about this last week in terms of the first generation in your family to move forward, in terms of aboriginal Ontarians, in terms of people with disabilities, francophones who want to study in their own language. We've been supporting that growth and, moving forward, this continues to be one of the preoccupations of the ministry.

We're working with institutions as we move forward, as we project forward. We've undertaken a review of

capital needs across the province, which, in turn, will allow us to map out where some of this growth is going to be. At the same time, I've been working with some of the northern institutions that have seen their growth level off, to talk about strategies there. This is one of the preoccupations of the ministry in terms of the planning and making sure that young people have access.

At the same time, I think it's important to look at some of the creativity that exists in the system. We've seen a huge success in partnerships between community colleges and universities. I think we need to offer students, especially this new cohort coming in that you referred to, a whole menu of opportunities. Many of them are looking for the applied learning experience of a community college, and they're also looking for the more academic side of a university. We've certainly been encouraging those sorts of partnerships.

I had the pleasure of going to the convocation for the Humber-Guelph program, again, an articulated program, "two plus two," as they say: two years at one, two years at the other. I was with the Premier at McMaster, and Mohawk does a BTech program; again, a more applied side at Mohawk, and then an academic side at McMaster. From what I understand, the graduates of this program are being snapped up, particularly in the manufacturing area, because there are manufacturing sides of this province that are continuing to prosper, and these students come forward with these skills.

When you look at the challenge, with the number of students coming into the system, we have to continue to encourage them; we have to continue to reach out to underrepresented groups. But we also have to make sure that this isn't, if you'll excuse the term, a warehousing operation, where you simply send the students off without a lot of choice or possibilities in terms of where they're going, and making sure that's aligned with the economy and some of the needs, so we can make sure they're finding employment.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): You have about a minute and a half left in this round, so a quick question.

Mr. Reza Moridi: Thank you, Minister. I'm very much pleased to see that in this very difficult and challenging economic situation, our government has plans and programs in place to help our laid-off workers. In particular, as you mentioned, Minister, these action centres are doing a great job in helping laid-off workers to get back to work and find new jobs. Second Career has attracted quite significant numbers of laid-off workers. We are aiming for 20,000 laid-off workers to take advantage of this wonderful program where they can continue their education at community college.

It's not the end of the world when you get laid off. Minister, in my life I have experienced—not being laid off—purging, in my home country of Iran when I was a professor at the university and the revolution happened. That was very, very tough. I can see this is not an easy process when one goes through it, but it's not the end of the world. This is the message we are basically giving to

our laid-off fellow Ontarians, that government is there to help you out. There are the action centres; there is Second Career, with \$385 million of investment; there are other programs under Employment Ontario.

As a government, as a society, we are beside our laid-off workers and we are there to help them out. We recognize that our real assets are our people, not our factories, not our buildings, not our roads. The real assets and the real wealth are the people, and we are investing in people.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): Thank you. You're over the time. It was a nice little speech.

Hon. John Milloy: I agree, Mr. Chair.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): To the official opposition. You've got about 10 minutes.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Maybe, Minister, I can call back the gentleman you had up about the work-study program.

Hon. John Milloy: Sure. Mr. Jackson.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Can either Mr. Jackson or the minister explain, briefly, what the work-study program involves?

Hon. John Milloy: I'll turn that over to—well, I think you have to introduce yourself.

Mr. Richard Jackson: I'm Richard Jackson, director of the student support branch.

The work-study program was created in 1983-84. How the program operates is that the ministry provides transfer payment grants to colleges and universities electing to participate in this program. The institutions line up employment opportunities for potential applicants to this program. The province pays 75% of the salary; the institutions pay the other 25%. The maximum funded amount is \$1,000 per academic term.

Mr. Tim Hudak: It's targeted at low-income individuals?

Mr. Richard Jackson: It's targeted to low-income individuals. It tends to go to individuals who may have special circumstances that can't be addressed through the normal policies and procedures of the student assistance program.

Mr. Tim Hudak: The annual OSAP transfer is approximately—about \$5 billion is allocated in the transfer payments for operating, from the ministry through estimates. What's the OSAP total approximately?

Mr. Richard Jackson: I didn't bring my briefing book to the table.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Maybe you can get back to me on that one.

Mr. Richard Jackson: Yes, I certainly can.

Mr. Tim Hudak: If I understand, from the minister's earlier comments, if you're receiving an OSAP grant or a loan or a Reaching Higher scholarship, it doesn't matter if you go to a publicly assisted university or college or not; you're eligible. But for work-study, that's not the case.

Mr. Richard Jackson: Correct.

Mr. Tim Hudak: What proportion would the work-study allocation be, from the total OSAP allocation: roughly 5%, 2%?

Mr. Richard Jackson: The work-study budget allocation is \$8 million per year. It's a relatively small percentage.

Mr. Tim Hudak: An extremely minimal percentage of the OSAP total.

Mr. Richard Jackson: Correct.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Minister, help me understand. You said one of the reasons that you don't allow these grants to go to non-publicly assisted universities or colleges is because you're saving on resources. If this is \$8 million of a huge budget—surely to goodness, private universities and colleges are a very small part of the system—you can't justify this on a resource basis.

Hon. John Milloy: No. I apologize if you misunderstood what I was saying. I mean, it's a nuance in what I said. What I said is that, obviously, every program has to have parameters around it. The resources available for student assistance through all forms are limited, and we made a decision to target these various programs at the system of colleges and universities across the province where most students go.

As I say, these programs have to have parameters. It would be nice if there was an endless supply of money and you could enrich and expand them. But it's about making choices.

1020

Mr. Tim Hudak: What proportion of Ontario students attend the publicly assisted universities and colleges? It's got to be, what, 95%, 97%?

Hon. John Milloy: Yes, we can give a ballpark of 97%.

Mr. Tim Hudak: So because of resources you drew the line, and the other 3% can't qualify for the work-study program?

Hon. John Milloy: Government is about—yes, there are lines that are drawn, parameters. These particular programs are focused at the system of community colleges and universities that we're familiar with.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Let's say a student goes to the University of Sudbury, for example. He would be eligible for OSAP. He'd be in that 3% that's not at a publicly assisted university, so why is he eligible for OSAP?

Hon. John Milloy: I think the University of Sudbury is—I thought that was the French-language—

Mr. Tim Hudak: If my example is wrong, let me change it to—

Hon. John Milloy: No, no, I apologize. Again, OSAP supports students and we're able to expand it so it supports other institutions. It doesn't—and I look to Mr. Jackson, who can give all the technical details—support every program that's offered. Certain programs are OSAP-eligible, and that decision was made to assist students.

I apologize if my answers are frustrating, but in a sense, it is what it is. Every program has parameters. Some are focused on the public network of the universities and colleges that we're familiar with; others have been broadened to allow programs that are outside

that system. Decisions have been made by the government.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I'm just trying to understand where you draw the line, aside from ideological reasons. If OSAP loans and grants are portable, if the Reaching Higher scholarships are portable, then I don't understand why, if a low-income individual who's trying to make her way through university or college gets a job helping the administration to help pay her bills so she can climb up the economic ladder, you say she's not eligible if she goes to a private university as opposed to publicly assisted. How can you justify drawing that line?

Hon. John Milloy: As I say, every program has parameters around it and these particular programs are focused on—I mean, there are programs that are focused on the network of community colleges and universities and there are programs that are broader, for example OSAP. If you want, Mr. Jackson, I'm sure, could give you the technical way we examine programs. Some programs are available for OSAP; some are not.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Let me ask just a simple question, because I don't think the minister has given me a good reason. So this individual comes from a low-income family and she's trying to climb her way up the ladder. If she can qualify for an OSAP grant and goes to, say, LaSalle College International, Tyndale University College and Seminary, for example—so if she's eligible for an OSAP grant, why isn't she eligible for a work-study program? What's the difference between the two programs?

Hon. John Milloy: Again, Mr. Hudak, decisions are made. I think in general you would agree that government resources are always scarce, and where the investments are made—Tyndale college or the examples you gave do not receive government support. Again, we've drawn the line in terms of the operating side; we've also targeted some of these other programs to the network of universities and colleges.

Mr. Tim Hudak: My point, Chair, to make sure it's clear, is that the largest proportion, the overwhelming proportion of the OSAP budget—grants, loans, scholarships—is fully eligible no matter where you go, fully portable, but for one of the smallest portions, \$8 million out of a \$4-billion or more budget—\$8 million—you're not eligible. It just seems bizarre. Unless I hear otherwise, I can only assume it's ideological, that the minister doesn't have faith in schools that aren't publicly assisted, doesn't think they are equal to others.

Let me give you another example, for your distance travel grant. If somebody is travelling from northern Ontario—say she lives in Thunder Bay and she wants to go down to Niagara—why is she eligible if she goes to Mohawk College but not Redeemer?

Hon. John Milloy: Sorry, I won't get into an argument about the travel grant. Where did you say the person was from?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Northern Ontario.

Hon. John Milloy: Oh, northern Ontario. Sorry. I thought you said a community. I apologize.

Mr. Tim Hudak: So if she goes to Mohawk she's eligible for the travel grant, but if she drives a few kilometres farther, she's no longer eligible because she chose Redeemer.

Hon. John Milloy: Again, overall—and you can appreciate this—resources are always limited, and we've chosen to focus these programs in terms of the network of colleges and universities to assist students going there. Decisions have to be made around the parameters. These are institutions supported significantly through operating dollars and we're assisting those students. As I say, there are parameters. At the end of the day, there have to be, because there's not an unlimited amount of funding.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Garfield Dunlop): I think we should adjourn there, folks; we've got about four minutes to get upstairs to the House. We'll recess until this afternoon at 4 o'clock.

The committee recessed from 1025 to 1603.

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): Good afternoon, folks. I'm calling to order the afternoon session of the estimates of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. We have a total of one hour and 47 minutes left, so we should be concluding today. Of course, after the time is up, we do have the votes at the end.

When we last met, this morning, it was the official opposition. They had 10 minutes and 39 seconds remaining on their clock. We will continue, after that, to 20 minutes to the NDP and then to the Liberals, and divide the remaining time equally.

Mr. Wilson, you have 10 minutes and 39 seconds to go.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Minister and colleagues. I just want to start the afternoon session with a couple of e-mails from constituents who have asked me to put this on the record regarding the York University strike; we're in day 20. They would like a response from the minister.

The first one I'm going to read in today—I have quite a few that are exactly like this, so this is a sample—is from Cassandra Veraty. She tells me in a follow-up e-mail that she is a constituent of mine.

“November 24

“To whom it may concern

“I'm currently a student at York University. I feel like I am being held hostage. Since November 6, 2008, my classes have been cancelled due to the strike. This is affecting my right to an education and jeopardizing my future. I'm asking you to pass back-to-work legislation as soon as possible to end this strike. Your assistance in this matter will be viewed most positively during the next election”—and, I'm sure, during your next election, too, Minister. I hadn't read that line before.

Hon. John Milloy: I think it's at the same time, Mr. Wilson.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Yes. So, “pass back-to-work legislation” is her request. Are you contemplating that? Are you drawing it up? When will jeopardy occur for about 50,000 students?

Hon. John Milloy: I'm happy to respond. I know there was an exchange this morning with your colleague, as well as one in the House.

As I think you're aware, universities are autonomous institutions. So their relationships with their workers, the negotiations that go on, and, in this case, a disruption through a strike are happening, in a sense, in an autonomous way between the administration and those individuals who are on strike.

We're obviously very disappointed that that has happened. We're encouraging both sides to come back to the table as soon as possible and to resolve the issue in the best interests of the students, of the individuals that you brought forward.

I understand and certainly appreciate their frustration. My colleague the Minister of Labour had an opportunity to speak to this this morning in the House, and in these situations, where we're talking about an autonomous institution, I defer to him in terms of public comments. He did outline in question period some of the work that we're doing to try to mediate it. We are encouraging, as I say, both sides to come to the table.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I just want to have you also respond to another constituent with a different e-mail. This is Ava Aslani, and she is from the south part of my riding. I responded to her with the e-mail I just read in, and then she wrote:

“Thank you for your reply.

“I feel I should tell you about the situation that I find myself in due to this strike. Every student is upset, but I think it's important to see first-hand what this has done.

“I work full-time for RBC to pay my tuition at York University. The only vacation time that I take from work is to allow me to write exams. I have to book this vacation time very early in the year and had it planned for December, which is normally an exam period.

“Due to the strike, my vacation time is essentially wasted, and once classes resume, I will have to write my final exams while still working, which I'm sure you can understand is very difficult to do.

“Furthermore, because of the strike, the school year will be extended into the summer months. I'm currently in my third year and will be writing my LSATs in the summer to apply for law school the following year. Now I'll have to juggle final exams at the same time that I will be preparing for my LSATs. I'm sure you understand that this is also very difficult to do.

“While I understand the situation faced by the TAs and contract faculty, I disagree that students should be the ones who are hurt by the situation. I plead with you to do everything in your power to get us back to class.

“If I was in fifth grade, I would be very excited about a strike. However, university students face a much different battle, and this is hurting each and every one of us severely.”

Yesterday, with the international exchange students, it was clear that jeopardy had been reached there and that they had to get back to class in order to meet course obligations in January, so people were able to make a

decision in that situation. How will you determine when jeopardy has occurred, that they might lose their semester? What processes are you taking there? Surely to goodness, Minister, you or the Minister of Labour must have some idea, based on precedent in these situations, just how many days—it's 20 days today. Is it going to be 25 days, 30 days?

Hon. John Milloy: Again, I appreciate your constituents' frustration. We're obviously very disappointed in the strike. We're encouraging both sides to sit down and resolve it.

Some of the questions that you're posing today really go to the heart of the system that has evolved of independent institutions, universities. The way that they're funded, the way that they're managed, the role of the boards of governors—this is not partisan or linked to one particular government. That's how it has evolved; therefore, they're in the role of an autonomous institution that is facing a work stoppage, a strike in this case.

1610

The government has mechanisms, some of which the Minister of Labour spoke about in the House, to try to mediate and bring the parties together. We're moving forward in the usual course to try to be as supportive as possible. Again, I think that's all I, as Minister of Training, Colleges, and Universities, can say on the matter. As I say, the Minister of Labour can talk about it in terms of labour relations, but again, we call on both sides to come to an agreement as soon as possible. We certainly appreciate the frustration, and we're trying to encourage both sides and to bring in the mechanisms that are in place.

Mr. Jim Wilson: A question here from a constituent of mine named Stacy Cridland. It's a different topic: a student scholarship inquiry. It's an e-mail regarding the Aiming for the Top scholarship. It's the first I've heard of this situation.

I'll paraphrase. She starts off by saying, "My name is Stacy Cridland. I am a resident of Tottenham and I am a student of Humber College in Etobicoke." She goes on to say that she qualified for an Aiming for the Top scholarship. She has maintained, in her first of couple years of college, the 80% required.

In her third year, she took extra courses so that she wouldn't have to go back this fall; she would go back the next semester. So over the first three years, she took extra courses, maintained her qualifications for the scholarship, and has been working since the summer at a co-op program with Cardinal Farm Supply, which is just outside of Alliston on County Road 10. And because she took the extra courses and she's not going back, she received a letter. She says:

"I am contacting you because a few weeks ago I received a letter in the mail saying that I had once again met the requirements for the scholarship and I am entitled to an amount of money that will cover my tuition costs." She contacted the school; the school said, "No, you're cut off because you're missing a semester."

So here she doubled up on courses so that she could stay at co-op longer and earn more money for herself, but

her scholarship is being cut off. She won't receive it at all in the next semester.

So I'm going to give you this and give you some time to think a bit. I think it's an unfortunate situation, and I'm wondering if the rules could be adjusted to help Stacy out. You may want to comment on it now, and I'll certainly table it for your consideration. I did send it to you on October 22, but it's been a month and she's in limbo. She doesn't really know what to do, and she's very, very disappointed that her scholarship's going to be cut off—which, obviously, she deserves.

Hon. John Milloy: I'm happy to follow up with you either offline—I don't want to take away from your time—or I can ask one of the officials to comment, but if you'd like we might be able to give you a more fulsome answer if you want to table it. It's up to you, Mr. Wilson.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I'm going to table it, and just while I have about two minutes, I'm going to table another one that I wrote to you on October 22. It's from Kelly Ellis from Collingwood. It's about the Second Career program, and it's quite a compelling story of how she's having a difficult time and difficulty with money. Perhaps when I have more time, I'll read a little bit more into the record of what she tells.

It's quite a sad story in many ways. She's got children, she's a single mom, she's 49 years old, and she doesn't want to waste taxpayers' money or time, she says, but she just can't seem to qualify for the Second Career program. So we'll go into that in further detail when I have a minute. That's it for now, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): To the third party: Mr. Marchese, you have 20 minutes.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Minister, I've got some questions, and I don't expect that you would have the answers today, so I'll just put the questions out.

Hon. John Milloy: Certainly.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: What is the student-faculty ratio now compared to before Reaching Higher was introduced? The other question is, how many new faculty have been hired in the last year by each institution? Can the minister provide the number of teaching assistant, grad assistant and contract faculty positions at each college and university and the total salary being paid to each group in each term for the current year and each of the last five years?

I have a few questions on the labour market development agreement, which I'll simply refer to as the LMDA. The labour market development agreement came into effect January 2007. The increase in money from the federal government is for programs and services for those eligible for employment insurance. This brings the committed amount from \$525 million to \$830 million annually by 2009-10—these are, I think, your figures. How much revenue has the ministry obtained so far from this agreement?

Hon. John Milloy: Again, I appreciate it's your time, if you want to table some of those questions. I think I may be able to shed a little bit of light on that, or do you want to continue to table those questions?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I don't mind just asking the question and getting an answer at another time; I have lots of questions.

Hon. John Milloy: Okay, sure.

Bells ringing.

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): It looks like an adjournment of debate motion, which, I think members know, is a 30-minute bell. When there are about five minutes left, I'll recess the committee and we will continue where we left off.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: So we're going to—

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): You have 25 minutes. You'll have your time for sure.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: As a follow-up question, how much of this commitment has yet to be fulfilled in terms of dollars?

Hon. John Milloy: I'll be brief—and I'd be happy to call Mr. French forward, who is sort of our resident expert on all this. The LMDA was a transfer program, so the dollars that came with it were to fund existing programs.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: They all came?

Hon. John Milloy: The premise of some of your questions, I believe, is that there was sort of an extra cash infusion that came in. As I said, we're happy to sort it out in the written answer we give you.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: That's fine. If the answer is that all the money has flowed, that's fine. Is that what I understand from you?

Hon. John Milloy: Can I call on Mr. French?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Yes, sure.

Hon. John Milloy: Again, this is your time, so I don't want to—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I agree. If it's a quick yes—all I need is a quick yes.

Hon. John Milloy: Okay.

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): I'm sorry. The gentleman's name is?

Mr. Kevin French: Kevin French, assistant deputy minister, employment and training division.

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): Thank you.

Mr. Kevin French: The minister is correct in stating that it was a transfer of both programs and services from the federal government and a transfer of staff who are now Ontario public servants.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: So all the money has flowed and it is, I assume, \$839 million. Is that the number?

Mr. Kevin French: The amount that was transferred from the federal government—it is adjusted annually—was approximately \$529 million in transfer payments for programs and services—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Okay.

Mr. Kevin French: —and there is an amount that is transferred to support the direct operating of those programs and services, which is through the labour market development agreement signed in November 2005.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Is that extra money that you're talking about—\$529 million for transfer payments

and then you said there was an extra amount that comes as a result of other cost—

Mr. Kevin French: To support the services that came with it.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: How much was that? Do you know?

Mr. Kevin French: It's approximately \$58 million.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Okay, good. In terms of what programs are actually funded by this, is that something that's easy to answer? Is it long? If it is, I'd rather get it in writing. I don't need to know today.

Mr. Kevin French: The programs that were transferred as a result of the labour market development agreement are all posted on the ministry website. The program descriptions are posted on the ministry website.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Okay.

Hon. John Milloy: We can obviously furnish it to you.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Very good. If that's the case, then we're fine. Thank you.

I have other questions you may want to answer, so you might want to stay there because they may pertain to you as well.

In February 2008, you made an announcement about a new Canada-Ontario labour market agreement coming into effect April 1, 2008.

Hon. John Milloy: Yes.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: At the time, you said it complements the labour market development agreement signed by the governments of Canada and Ontario in 2005, under which the province assumed responsibility in 2007 for designing and delivering employment programs and services for unemployed people eligible under the EI program. Could you explain how this agreement complements the previous agreement?

Hon. John Milloy: Sure, and I can also refer to Mr. French for a bit more technical answer. One of the thrusts of the LMDA was to deal with individuals who are not EI eligible. The LMDA obviously focused on the EI side, so that's why I used the term "complement."

Kevin, I don't know if you want to add.

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Mr. Kevin French: That's correct, Minister. What the labour market agreement actually focuses on are—some of the programs and services that were transferred under the labour market development agreement have eligibility requirements tied to the Employment Insurance Act. This agreement does not have those—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Exactly what he said. Very good.

The labour market partnership agreement between the provincial government was to invest \$1.36 billion over six years, beginning in 2005-06. This was to fill gaps in the labour market programming for those not eligible for EI.

How much revenue has the ministry obtained so far from the labour market partnership agreement signed with Ottawa in 2005?

Hon. John Milloy: My understanding is—and I'll turn to Kevin on this—that the funding never flowed. Is that correct, Kevin?

Mr. Kevin French: Yes.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: The funding never flowed?

Hon. John Milloy: So funding did not—Kevin, do you want to—

Mr. Kevin French: Yes, that's correct.

Hon. John Milloy: I always feel more safe to have Kevin confirm.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Oh, absolutely. It's very good.

So this is an agreement that was signed and the money has never flowed?

Hon. John Milloy: That's correct.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: And you've been screaming about this for a while now.

Hon. John Milloy: Well, as you mentioned, the LMA came forward, which was an approach by the federal government in this area. My understanding is that part of the issue was there was a change in government federally, as you know. So the agreement that was made was made with a previous government.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: So this is effectively dead?

Hon. John Milloy: Kevin, do you want to—

Mr. Kevin French: If I may, I would characterize it as the federal government talked about the provisions through a pan-Canadian approach to the labour market agreement. A number of provinces entered into discussions with the federal government. As the minister mentioned, it was focused on those who are non-EI eligible to ensure that we can provide services—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Are there discussions about this fund? Is it ongoing? Are there any ongoing discussions between you and them? Where is it at?

Mr. Kevin French: We've concluded the labour market agreement, which has, I would say, replaced the labour market partnership agreement that had been concluded.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Okay. So you said you concluded the labour market—

Mr. Kevin French: Agreement.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Agreement.

Mr. Kevin French: In February 2008.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Okay, let me understand this. This program—the question around which I was asking—never went through because it was negotiated with the previous government? So no money has ever flowed?

Hon. John Milloy: Yes. There was an agreement made between Premier McGuinty and Prime Minister Martin, which—and again, I'll look to Kevin for confirmation—eventually ended up in the labour market development agreement going through and the transfer of federal programs.

As an adjunct to that was the labour market partnership agreement, which was a fund of money to address some other training needs and other needs.

I have to confess, Mr. Marchese, and I'm not trying to avoid the question, that a lot of this happened, of course, before I was minister, in the sense there were discussions between the federal government and the province about moving forward with the labour market partnership agreement. I don't have all the details of those negotiations but, in the end, that funding never flowed. A new government came to power in Ottawa, and what we're looking forward to is that labour market agreement.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Right. So that money, had we had it, would have gone into expansion and enhancement of apprenticeship, correct? It would have gone into labour market integration of recent immigrants, literacy and essential skills? That money would have gone into these areas and it's not going there. Is that my understanding?

Hon. John Milloy: Well, yes. The funding never flowed under the agreement.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: All right. Do we leave it, Mr. Chair? Is that—

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): No, no. You finish your time. There's still 21 minutes until the vote.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Oh, I see. It's half an hour.

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): Yes, it's a half-hour bell.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I thought you said we had five minutes.

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): Yes, we'll stop the committee within five minutes before the vote.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: On apprenticeships, according to the ministry, approximately 110,000 apprentices are currently learning a trade. Mr. French is saying yes.

Hon. John Milloy: Yes, yes.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: This government reports that apprenticeships in the skilled trades have grown by more than 25% over the past four years.

Hon. John Milloy: Yes.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: You both are nodding, so that's good.

Is it possible to break down how that growth is calculated, including the money spent?

Hon. John Milloy: Yes. We can get you that information.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: As part of the skills to jobs plan announced by this government, \$75 million over three years was committed to expand apprenticeship, with the goal of reaching 32,500 new registrants annually. That's an increase of 25%. Was this commitment new money?

Hon. John Milloy: Yes.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: It's good when you both nod at the same time because otherwise, it would be complicated. You should be careful, Mr. French. How much of this money will actually be spent in 2008-09?

Hon. John Milloy: I'll refer to Mr. French for that breakdown.

Mr. Kevin French: We can provide a detailed breakdown of the increase that is happening this year. It's—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: It's okay. If we don't have that readily available, I don't mind reading it another day at a reasonable time. How long do you think it might take to get some of these answers?

Mr. Kevin French: We can do that in short order.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: A couple of days, a week, I would think?

Hon. John Milloy: You should know that people were working through the lunch hour to start to poke at some of your questions.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I wouldn't want to be in their position necessarily.

What portion of this money is federal funding, if any?

Hon. John Milloy: Again—and I'll look to Mr. French to confirm this—I think we're getting back into the exchange that we had earlier, in the sense that we receive money from the Ministry of Finance under these programs. So, as we noted, the Ministry of Finance has certain arrangements with the federal government, in terms of transfers. We do not receive any money from the federal government directly for this. Is that correct?

Mr. Kevin French: That's correct.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: In November 2005, your government introduced an apprenticeship for truck drivers. Is it possible to list what other new apprenticeships this government has introduced since then?

Hon. John Milloy: Yes.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: If you don't mind, could you give us the whole list?

Hon. John Milloy: Certainly.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: It's not available on-line anywhere, is it?

Mr. Kevin French: No, it wouldn't be listed that way. That would be correct.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Okay, that's great.

A recent report by the Construction Sector Council showed that even though more Ontario workers are registering for apprenticeships, the rate of completion is declining, and, Minister, you made mention of that in your initial remarks. According to construction apprenticeship program data supplied to the Construction Sector Council from your ministry, there has been a 7.8% increase in registration since 2004; over the same period, there was a 9.6% decrease in completions. I know that we like to talk about registration—it makes sense—but what is being done to ensure that those registered in apprenticeship programs in Ontario are actually completing them?

Hon. John Milloy: Actually, Kevin, do you want to comment on the figures, then I can pick up? Mr. Marchese had the pleasure of hearing me go on for 19 minutes about this the other day, as a few of my staff have told me that's how long I went on.

I'm very happy to talk about the plans for apprenticeships. One of the overarching issues is completion. It's also the fact that—I'm being very forthright here—we don't have access to all the types of statistics that we need, in terms of bringing forward strategies. Part of the new approach with the college of trades is to have a

mechanism that would give us a more fulsome list of statistics.

Again, I can ask Mr. French to talk about the numbers you just gave and maybe some of the immediate policies, and I can comment too, if you'd like.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: If you want to comment on the numbers, whether they're accurate or not, that would be fine, but mostly on the issue of completion, and whether you have a plan—

Mr. Kevin French: As the minister indicates and the budget indicates, as we look at growth in apprenticeship for registrations—and your number of 32,500 by 2012 was correct—part of looking at that growth strategy will be increasing completion rates and making sure that the completion rates are going up.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: And my question is, what's the plan to do that?

1630

Mr. Kevin French: As the minister indicated, we have an increase in resources to increase the size of the apprenticeship system and we will be looking at completion rates.

Hon. John Milloy: Part of the idea of the college of trades is to have a forum that can more readily deliver the best advice from the sectors on how to move forward, in terms of completion rates.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Of course. I'm on the same page with everyone else here; we want them to complete their programs. The question is, what are we doing? If you've got a mechanism or a plan, I'd love to know about it, if it's concrete.

Hon. John Milloy: Obviously, issues like the apprenticeship tax credit, resources we're using to help—I spoke a bit about it this morning—in terms of the training infrastructure all contribute indirectly to keeping people in it.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I have some questions for you after, on the apprenticeship training tax credit, because I'm not sure that's a good mechanism. But we'll get to that in a minute. The question at the moment is, if there's a mechanism or plan, I'd love to hear about it. How do you keep track of completions, by the way?

Hon. John Milloy: Over to Kevin for that.

Mr. Kevin French: We'll get back to you.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Is there a mechanism?

Mr. Kevin French: We'll get back to you on that.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Okay. Another recent national study shows that those who complete an authentic apprenticeship have an excellent skill set and better wages than others; that is, if they actually complete it. I guess it's a repetition of the same question about what steps have been taken to create placements for these apprenticeships, as opposed to simply registering them. I'm assuming it's part of the same idea about how we get them to complete their placement.

Do we have two minutes?

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): You have two minutes on the nose.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Also, as part of the skills-to-jobs plan, \$45 million was announced to be spent over three years for the apprenticeship enhancement fund, to buy essential state-of-the-art equipment. The fund is for colleges to update their training facilities; I understand that. Is this announcement, the \$45 million, new money?

Hon. John Milloy: Yes.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Can you please tell us the status of this fund? In terms of allocation, where is it?

Hon. John Milloy: Kevin?

Mr. Kevin French: In the summer, we issued guidelines to the colleges for the apprenticeship enhancement fund. Colleges responded to that through a call for proposals. They responded in September. We are now going through an evaluation process for that funding and will be in a position shortly to have completed that evaluation.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: So really, no money has flowed yet, because you are just responding to those requests.

Mr. Kevin French: At this point, the money has not flowed for that particular funding.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Okay, so nothing has flowed yet. There are criteria for receiving money from this fund, right?

Hon. John Milloy: Yes.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Could you send us those criteria?

Hon. John Milloy: Yes.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: And can we get a copy of the agreement that recipient institutions need to sign to get money from the apprenticeship enhancement fund? Is it possible?

Hon. John Milloy: Yes.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Great. Thank you so much.

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): Good timing. Thanks, Mr. Marchese. We'll just go for another five minutes and then recess for the vote. We do want to get the committee finished today so the minister and his staff don't have to come back tomorrow. So, to the government members. Mr. Craitor.

Mr. Kim Craitor: Minister, a short question, but before I do that, for the record I want to say thank you again. I think it was November 10 when you came down to Niagara and we had that event at Niagara College—it was kind of special too—for the Second Career program. As I said there, it was pretty neat, because the individual who talked about the program was in the program and was sharing a couple of things with us. One was that he went to Merritton High School, which was where I went—I thought that was kind of special; I don't remember him, but we talked for a while afterwards—and he had also, unfortunately, worked at Hayes Dana, where I worked when I was a kid. It was a pleasure listening to him, from his perspective as someone who is in the program and saying, "Hey, it's a good program. I'm really pleased that the government has come forward with that." He was there of his own accord, so that was a really positive thing to hear.

I just want to ask you one short question, and it's about aboriginal students. In my riding, in Fort Erie, for example, we have the Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre, which is a very active centre for aboriginal people. It's no secret that our aboriginal student population faces unique barriers in terms of accessing post-secondary education. Whether it be an issue related to economic barriers or cultural barriers or even the simple fact that they must travel farther to attend classes, we know that aboriginals are traditionally an under-represented and underserved student population. In the Niagara region, I know that we've made great strides, and I mentioned the Fort Erie native centre as one of those, because I'm over there quite a bit. I've seen a concerted effort from the province and our northern post-secondary institutions to reach out to the aboriginal students and to make accessing a higher education an attractive and viable option.

Aboriginal post-secondary education is historically a federal responsibility, and I must tell you I'm concerned by some of the comments that have been made at the federal level and the overall lack of commitment. I'm just wondering—and you may not have time until we come back after the bell—if you could share with this committee what you are doing and what your ministry is doing to assist aboriginal post-secondary education in Ontario and what our plans are, moving forward, in that area.

Do we have time?

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): Yes, you do, actually. I assume this is probably a three-minute answer at the maximum.

Hon. John Milloy: Sure. You know I'm a man of few words, Mr. Chair.

I appreciate the question. When you're talking about aboriginal education, it's a bit of a conundrum, because we speak about wanting to have the overall population at its best, that everyone have access to training and education. Those individuals who look at demographics realize that over the longer term our population is getting older, and if we want to increase the workforce, we have to reach out to, quite frankly, under-represented groups and bring them in, because that's where the wave is.

In the aboriginal community, one of the youngest communities, you're seeing tremendous growth amongst young people that you're not seeing in other areas. At the same time, it's a group that's not represented to the same extent in terms of our colleges and universities. We have a situation where we literally have a pool of individuals who we need to be at their best, and yet they're not being represented to the degree they should be in our colleges and universities as well as skilled trades.

So one of the things that we've done is put together a strategy to support aboriginal students in our colleges and universities as well as training. In 2007-08, we invested \$24.1 million for aboriginal post-secondary education and training. Just to give you a little bit of a breakdown, we support aboriginal students at 37 of 43 post-secondary institutions through the aboriginal education and training strategy and also the access to opportunities strategy. One

is a more recent program; one has been around for a little bit longer. At the same time, we support eight aboriginal institutions for recognized post-secondary programming. These institutions work in partnership with colleges and universities and offer a program at the institution itself, but as I say, it's associated with a college or university.

One that certainly made the news earlier this year was the First Nations Technical Institute in the eastern part of Ontario, near Belleville. You mentioned the federal government, and that was actually a bit of a disappointment on our part. The federal government had been one of the funders, as well as the province, and they indicated that they were in fact going to be pulling out \$1.5 million from FNTI, as it's known. Mr. Marchese makes an appearance in this story. I remember one day early on you passed on a letter to me from the head of FNTI to talk about the plight they were facing, and we were able to work with FNTI and give them \$1.5 million, and we continue to work with them to put them on a stronger financial footing. But the disappointment—

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): Minister, let's leave it at that point. We're going to recess now. The committee will resume immediately after the vote.

The committee recessed from 1639 to 1648.

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): I call the committee back into session. There are 13 minutes and 50 seconds left in the government's time. Mr. Craitor, you had the floor, or if McNeely has some questions.

Mr. Kim Craitor: Chair, I think the minister was still answering my question.

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): Do you have anything further, Minister, on Mr. Craitor's question?

Hon. John Milloy: Yes. As I said, it's been a real priority, in terms of increasing the number of aboriginal students in our post-secondary institutions. They're an underrepresented group, and ironically, they're a young part of the population that, quite frankly, we need to be participating fully.

I spoke about some of the funding and some of the programs that are available. As I mentioned, the aboriginal education and training strategy—it's known affectionately as the AET strategy—is one of those that has actually been around our ministry for some time—since 1991-92. It provides funding, \$8.1 million, for a variety of sources, but one of them, and I'll just speak about it for a minute and then we can perhaps move on, is to post-secondary institutions—to universities and colleges—to help support students as they come forward. I think studies have shown that oftentimes, if students can have support early on and throughout their programs, they can feel much more at home in a setting and find success. Some of the funding from AETS goes to providing services such as counsellors, support services, curriculum development and funding to offset the costs of delivering aboriginal programming.

I've had an opportunity to tour almost every post-secondary institution, and I've seen a number of different examples of the types of supports that are in place—some of them more informal, some of them more formal—for

aboriginal students, but they're really geared to offering that welcoming feeling, so that someone who is perhaps far away from home is made to feel a part of a community, part of the family of the college and university, and move forward.

Certainly we're going to continue to work with all those institutions, our colleges and universities, as well as the eight aboriginal institutions, not only to ensure that the participation rate amongst aboriginal students increases, but also to ensure that aboriginal students are completing their programs and receiving that support moving through.

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): You've got about 11½ minutes left. Mr. McNeely.

Mr. Phil McNeely: Thank you, Minister, for being here in front of this committee. Last summer, we had an excellent announcement in my riding of Ottawa-Orléans for the francophone community.

About 50% of the people involved in the construction industry in the Ottawa area—because of the large francophone population from Prescott and Russell, and Ottawa-Orléans and Ottawa-Vanier—are francophones. One of the issues for the francophone community was having training in their language in the skills involving the construction industry.

We carried out a study with the community. We had Ottawa University, Carleton, Algonquin, La Cité collégiale, some of the high schools and the trades groups involved in a one-day summit meeting. One of the issues that came out was that we were in need of facilities in our area for this training, so I was very pleased when the announcement was made for \$6.7 million from your ministry to La Cité collégiale.

They negotiated successfully with the city for servicing and for the land for this facility. They have good interest from some of the French contractors and other contractors from the area to supply funds. That program is ongoing. They've got their land and the servicing. They're in the process now of hiring the consultant to do the architectural and engineering work which will be required. With 120,00 people in Ottawa-Orléans without a college, it was excellent news for us, and it will be our first post-secondary education facility.

We were fortunate enough to get some of the distance learning. That facility was started about a year ago now, and it's working quite well. That gives us a little bit of post-secondary education, but the facility with us, La Cité collégiale—they're waiting for matching dollars now from the federal government. We haven't heard where they are with that.

I'd just like to ask you how the dollars were used across the province to increase the facilities and how the choices were made. We were very fortunate to be one of the selected sites, in Ottawa-Orléans.

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): Just to quickly interrupt again, we have a 30-minute bell for an adjournment-of-the-House motion, so I will let us proceed until about five minutes before the bell, and again, we'll have to recess at that point and return. Minister.

Hon. John Milloy: Great. I want to thank you, Mr. McNeely, for that question. I also want to thank you for the strong advocacy for the project in your riding. I think I'd be understating the fact if I said that you were relentless, and as I believe I joked on the day, the fact that you sat behind me—you never let me forget about that project. Not only did La Cité have a very strong champion in you here at Queen's Park, but it was also an excellent project which met a lot of the needs in the francophone community and was part of a larger package of projects that went forward that were announced as part of the March budget.

I often point out that when we think of education, especially the way Hollywood always portrays it, it's always about the inspiring teacher or the wonderful classroom experience, and that is crucial. At the same time, there is a bricks-and-mortar element to post-secondary education, to all forms of education. We have to make sure that students are taught in facilities which are up to date, which are energy-efficient, which are safe—and the purchase of equipment. That's part of what we're talking about in terms of skills training: that it's up-to-date equipment and that they're training on relevant equipment for the sorts of things they're going to face in the workforce.

As part of the skills to jobs action plan, we invested \$190 million at 12 different colleges across the province to increase space and address equipment shortages, particularly in the area of expanding skills training. That's what we wanted to do. I'm pleased to announce that this investment created over 13,000 new spaces at our colleges in terms of skills training, and approximately 4,500 of them were apprenticeship spaces.

You asked about the rationale behind the funding to specific colleges. As you know, we maintain ongoing relationships with all of our post-secondary institutions in terms of their capital needs. I think in the course of this estimates I've talked about how we're having a much more systemized approach right now with our colleges and universities and working with them, so that's moving forward. But in terms of this, successful projects had to meet one or more of the following criteria which address both the academic side and the capital side.

First, the project that came forward had to increase and expand opportunities for students, primarily in the area of apprenticeships and skilled trades, and also in college certificate and diploma activity. There had to be flexibility of the program to be offered in expanding or creating pathways between apprenticeships, skills, trades and college programming, responding to high-priority sectors and needs of the economy, especially in the areas with identified skills shortages. Responsiveness to community economic or skills and training needs and the extent of community and industry support is another factor we looked at. Expected non-government funding contribution is another part of what we examine—links between the proposal and partnerships with industry, school boards, local municipalities and other post-secondary education providers. Another aspect we looked at was whether the project increased space, whether it

leveraged enhancements to existing space, reduced deferred maintenance and addressed energy efficiency issues. Finally, we looked at projects that supported development in regions experiencing economic challenges.

These were some of the criteria that came forward.

I'd just point out that besides this specific fund of \$190 million that went to colleges for skills development, there were also announcements over the past year in terms of deferred maintenance or "campus renewal," if you want to use that term. Again, this funding went to our colleges and universities to help them to upgrade existing facilities and make sure they're up to scratch.

As I think, Mr. McNeely, you of all people would know, with your background and many of the issues that you're interested in, in giving money for deferred maintenance, you often can upgrade facilities and save on operating costs when it comes to things like energy efficiency and environmental controls. I know many of the college and university presidents have expressed appreciation about the fact that deferred maintenance, although in one sense one time only, has allowed them to reduce some of their operating costs.

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At the same time, we also worked with the university sector and identified \$264 million for strategic capital projects with clear links to economic growth and competitiveness, and I think members are aware of a number of them: \$45 million for Ryerson University's student learning centre, very nearby to Queen's Park; \$40 million for the University of Windsor's centre for engineering innovation; \$33.5 million for Brock University's Niagara health and biosciences research complex; \$20 million for the centre of excellence for French language and bilingual post-secondary education at York University's Glendon campus, which would touch a bit upon your community, as it's of interest to francophone students to pursue that; \$18 million for the Nipissing University and Canadore College e-learning resource centre—again, I had a chance to visit their facility there, essentially their library and resource centre. They were able to build a new facility. One of the interesting aspects of that particular project is that it represents a partnership between Nipissing and Canadore. They're both on the same campus and students are able to access it from both the college and the university.

There's also \$16.5 million for the McMaster University-Mohawk College bachelor of technology partnership, which I mentioned this morning. It's another wonderful partnership, where students receive applied learning at the college, as well as the academic side of it from McMaster University. I'm told repeatedly that graduates of that program are snapped up right away and that it's a very popular program and one that's very much in line with the economic priorities of the province.

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): About a minute left.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I think, Mr. Chair, in light of the time, I do have a question but it's—

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): Okay, you'll get another round.

Again, we will recess with about five minutes left. There are still 20 minutes for the bells. We have about 58 minutes remaining in the time. Giving a bit of time for the vote and coming back, we had an agreement that it was about 17 minutes each. Is that all right? All right. Then this is the last round of 17 minutes each, to the official opposition. Mr. Wilson.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Minister, I just want to finish off this letter from Kelly Ellis, my constituent in Collingwood. I circulated it to you and to members of the committee. I don't think she inadvertently missed the deadlines. I think she put her application in on time. But she thinks your ministry, because of summer holidays and that, might have missed her application—and because she already started the program. So I'll just read it into the record.

As you note in the first sentence, she was laid off on April 29, 2008, and in May she started the process to apply for the Second Career program. Just near the bottom, it says:

“—School started Tuesday September 2, 2008—I did not have formal approval—” for the program—“I contacted my caseworker (through VPI) who in turn contacted the ministry on more than a couple occasions—nothing;

“—I finally received word on Wednesday October 8, 2008, that I was declined because I did not have an exact date to offer and had already started the program. Their assumption is that I started therefore I must be able to fund it myself. I tried to explain the situation (the money spent was the money I agreed to spend as my own contribution to my education and also that time had run out—(school had begun)—they were quite focused on the fact”—they, I guess, are the bureaucrats—“I had started already;

“—I was not prepared to lose my money, nor was I prepared to have to wait until next year to begin my course—I'm 49 years old and not wanting to waste any more time;

“—I have no money coming into my household as of September—as stated previously I was laid off work—EI ended after the first week of September—I have two teenage children dependent on me; my husband and I have been separated for a number of years—we share custody of our children;

“—Should I be allowed to continue my education through this government program everyone wins—I win because I'm able to get this education and am almost guaranteed a job afterwards—my community (Collingwood) wins because this program is badly needed and I'll be able to help any number of children/youth in our area—and the system (government) wins in that I'll not be reliant on government funding or assistance after I've received my diploma.”

By the way, she's going for her diploma in the child and youth worker program.

“—I'm asking for the Ontario government, or more specifically the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities to look outside the box—see the people

you're working with and what they're able to accomplish. I greatly appreciate the fact that we have these programs available in the first place, I truly am. I am hoping that I will be able to take advantage of it and I know I will be able to do a lot of good as a result of it, so please help me to do just that.”

Minister, given that you have such a low uptake on this program to date, could you please look into this on behalf of my constituent Kelly Ellis and have someone give her a call from your ministry? Her phone number is provided in the letter.

The next one I have, just very quickly, is from Arnold Radford, also from Utopia in my riding. I don't think I've given you a copy of this, but I will:

“My wife received funding from Service Canada, via a Careers Canada contact. This was for an aesthetic school in Barrie. The school is called Rinaldi College. She has a copy of the finance contract from EI, and Rinaldi College is listed as the recipient of all of the funds. We have a receipt from the college”—and he attaches the receipt for the full amount. Private career colleges is the topic here.

“My wife completed two thirds of the curriculum in November 2006, but had to leave for maternity. The college was given written notice that she needed to leave. It was agreed that the last module be completed, when it was offered by the college and could be accommodated by my wife and child's schedule.

“This college is trying to force us to pay them \$1,500 for a module they have been paid on. A couple of months back, they cited they could do this based on ‘Ministry of Training’ guidelines. I felt that if the federal government at the time, gave all this money to Rinaldi, who they approved, then Rinaldi should be listed on your site ... but it is not. The director is using your ministry as a tool to try to extort us. I thought best to contact, where I can get some action on a serious issue.

“This college received federal money, now we are being exhorted to pay money to a school who is not listed on your site. My wife was grading high 90s and she signed on to do well and complete, or would have to give back the training money. After the extortion attempt today”—and this is dated October 2 of this year—“when we had to ‘come in’ to the college, I am not comfortable with my wife attending there. Please help us as we have no money to pay anyone anything, especially under duress. This is a serious matter, we appreciate your help. Please contact me for details.

“Arnold Radford”—and his phone numbers are there.

Apparently he has filed a formal complaint with the college. We heard from him a few days ago, and he hadn't heard anything at all. He's been trying to go through the process and he's kind of stuck. So if you could have someone in your ministry look at that, I'd appreciate it.

Hon. John Milloy: Certainly, I'd be pleased to look into all those cases.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I'm just going to hand the floor over to my colleague from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock.

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): Ms. Scott, there's about 12 minutes on your clock. We'll probably stop a bit early, though, and you can resume.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'll try to ask questions as quickly as possible.

Thank you, Minister again for being here, in front of estimates with us today.

Your ministry briefing book indicated that the total new apprenticeship registrations in 2007-08 are 26,000. Can you tell us what percentage of those registrations will be getting their on-site training employment—so not just registered in class. We're asking about the on-site training.

Hon. John Milloy: Sure. I'm going to ask an official to come forward, or do you want to table that question?

Ms. Laurie Scott: Whatever they would prefer. I don't want them to take too long.

My other part of that: I'm hoping that the ministry does keep track of would-be apprentices looking to get their hands-on training, because that's the big bottleneck that we've certainly been hearing from all our communities. You know I introduced private member's legislation to change the ratios to one to one for some of the trades to help with that bottleneck.

Do you guys have the information there?

Hon. John Milloy: We'll endeavour to get it.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Okay, I'll ask to have it tabled.

Do you know if you have targets for the new apprentices to be getting the on-the-job training? When you mention in the Legislature on the record that there are 50,000 more apprentices in the province of Ontario, we're just wondering how that is broken down. Have you broken it down? Is it just that they've registered for class—or there's a certain percentage that are actually on-site getting that part of their apprenticeship training? Do you have targets?

Hon. John Milloy: Yes.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Your ministry does have targets? You can give me a percentage or something if you don't have the actual number.

Hon. John Milloy: This is Patti Redmond—

Ms. Patti Redmond: I'm Patti Redmond. I'm the acting assistant deputy minister of the strategic policy and programs division.

When an apprentice is registered, in many cases they would actually start their on-the-job training first, and then they would be scheduled for in-school. So the registration takes place between the employer and the apprentice, and the ministry is involved with that. So at any one point in time, apprentices are given release from their on-the-job training in order to go to the in-school training portion of it. It can vary trade by trade, but in general it is both on the job and the in-school portion. That's what we call a registration of an apprentice.

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Ms. Laurie Scott: So you're actually tracking how many are in the class and how many are on the job, like if there's a coordination. What we're hearing is they're getting in the class; they can't get on-the-job training.

You're saying that they're matched. When they come in they could come right from the on-the-job training and into the classroom?

Ms. Patti Redmond: Generally, obviously, because, if I understand your question, the in-school training is scheduled in order to be able to have the classroom sizes that are appropriate, given the individual. They are given a release from work in order to attend the in-school portion of the training.

In terms of your question on tracking, obviously we work with the training delivery agents. They schedule that in-school portion depending on the numbers in their particular community, and obviously it's going to vary, training delivery agent by training delivery agent, in terms of when they are actually offering the training. The ministry does work with them in terms of that, but they are the ones that actually do the scheduling.

Ms. Laurie Scott: So anyone that's applying for an apprenticeship program would already have someone to give them on-the-job training? Would they already be paired up, pretty much?

Ms. Patti Redmond: You do not access the in-school portion unless you are a registered apprentice; in other words, there is an employer that has agreed to take you on as an apprentice. The ministry does offer pre-apprenticeship programs for individuals to help support them to get into that registration, so there is some school training associated with that, but the actual in-school portion of apprenticeship has to be with a registered apprentice.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Obviously there are wait-lists; I know there are in my communities. Some of my young people wait years to get into the programs. Do you have a wait-list or do you know how many young people are out there applying to be apprentices but they can't get the on-the-job training to get into the classroom?

Hon. John Milloy: Again, and I'll defer to the expertise of Ms. Redmond, the apprentice starts with an employer. In a sense, the employer has indentured that apprentice and then they follow through both on-the-job training and in-classroom training, so I'm not sure of your question. I'm getting a little confused by your question in the sense of waiting lists, because there may be young people who are looking for an apprenticeship spot, looking to become indentured in their community, as you point out, and so in a sense there would be, if you want to call it, a waiting list because they're looking for that position. But there's not a waiting list in the sense that you go and sign up and say, "I want to be in an apprenticeship and when the number comes up I get to become an apprentice." You have to form that relationship with an employer and go and say, "I'd like to be an apprentice," and the agreement's made.

Ms. Laurie Scott: And that's what we're saying, that there is the bottleneck. They can't get in with an employer, whoever's training them, in order to get on this apprentice program to get into the classroom. That's why we're saying the ratios are different. So if I have a lot of young people waiting to become apprentices, they can't get in to the employer end of it. That's where the bottle-

neck is. You have the classes on, but they can't get in to that side. I have them waiting years before they can get in to an employer, whether through a union hall or a private employer. Do you know what I'm saying? That's why the ratios—

Hon. John Milloy: No. I understand what you're saying; I'm just saying that the classroom part of the exercises is not separate, it's all one exercise where you go and present yourself to an employer and are hired on—"indentured" is the term that's used—and then you follow a training regime which sees you in classroom-based training as well as on-the-job training. Yes, there may be—you've brought examples of individuals who want to pursue an apprenticeship and can't find an employer to take them on.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Exactly. That's our skilled trades shortage and that's what we're trying to address. But I'll move on, since we're short of time.

You announced \$25 million earlier this year for union employer training centres. Could you tell me the application process that was filled out for the various centres, how they applied for that funding, for that \$25 million?

Hon. John Milloy: Sure. I actually went through some of it this morning in my opening remarks. I'm just looking at who's the—yes, we can provide—

Ms. Laurie Scott: Was there an application form?

Hon. John Milloy: I believe your colleague asked for that material and it may be part of the package that we tabled.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Okay, so you're going to table how the applications—

Hon. John Milloy: The skills training infrastructure program guidelines and requirements. It was tabled as part of it coming forward.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Okay, thank you. I'm sorry I wasn't here this morning.

One of your generous friends to the party, the president of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, John Grimshaw, was quite attacking in a press release that said that the members of the Ontario Electrical League have no interest in seeing apprentices gain their journeyman status. That was in relation to when I'd brought the private member's bill forward for the one-to-one ratios. Do you agree with that statement from the Ontario Electrical League that they have no interest in seeing apprenticeships gain their journeyman status?

Hon. John Milloy: I think the issue—and I had a chance to comment on this last week. I think everybody involved in this—you're speaking particularly of electricians, but I think in all the skilled trades. In all the perspectives that come forward, they want to see young people be attracted to the trade, they want to make sure that young people are properly trained, and they want to make sure that they complete the trade and that there's work for them at the end. The issue of ratios involves all those factors. It involves a student-teacher relationship, it involves making sure that there's proper guidance for the individual, it involves making sure that the apprentice is

not exploited, that you don't have situations where someone brings in tons and tons of apprentices and—

Ms. Laurie Scott: So you don't really agree—

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): You know what, folks? I'm going to pause at this point and we'll recess committee. When we come back, Ms. Scott, you'll have just under three minutes.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Okay.

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): We're recessed until right after the vote.

The committee recessed from 1716 to 1725.

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): We are back in session. The official opposition has two minutes and 44 seconds.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Okay. I'll talk even faster.

Before the break, Minister, you said you believe that all groups want to see success. So you really disagree with Mr. Grimshaw, do you?

Hon. John Milloy: Disagree or—I'm sorry?

Ms. Laurie Scott: I read you the quote. He said that he has no interest in seeing apprentices gain their journeyman status. I asked you if you agree with that. You said you agree that all groups want to see success. So you don't agree with Mr. Grimshaw.

Hon. John Milloy: The particular quote and the context, etc., I can't comment on, but I will say that I believe all groups are interested in seeing young people come to the profession, completing and receiving proper training and at the end there's a job. I think there are different perspectives on the issue. The apprenticeship program, as you know, is governed by a system of receiving the best advice from the sector itself, so I think everyone who comes forward with a perspective comes forward wanting to see the apprenticeship system succeed, and there are different perspectives. That's why we look for the best advice.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Mr. Grimshaw also said that the apprenticeship system in Ontario is working. Do you agree with that?

Hon. John Milloy: Yes, I believe the apprenticeship system is working. I also believe, though, that it can be improved and enhanced, which is why, based on the work begun by Mr. Armstrong—and I had a chance to speak about it earlier this week—we're looking at a new approach which is going to enhance the system, while still keeping in mind the principle of receiving the best advice from the industry.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Right. You've stated over and over again that there's a need to reform and enhance the system, but you agree that the apprenticeship system is working. Mr. Armstrong was not asked to look at the apprenticeship, by the way. His report did not look at the apprenticeship ratio.

Hon. John Milloy: No. Mr. Armstrong's report does mention apprenticeship ratios. What Mr. Armstrong concluded is that to pull compulsory certification out as one issue was perhaps not the best way to move forward, because overall there were improvements that could be made to the entire system. There was also the fact, which

I think he rightly pointed out, that different aspects of the system are connected to other aspects of the system. If you want to talk about compulsory certification, you also need to talk about issues around enforcement. You need to talk around issues of data collection, on which we've had a little bit of a discussion here. You have to look at issues around ratios. There is a whole range of issues, and he talked about enhancing the system overall. That being said, I think the system as it exists right now has had a great deal of success and serves us well. Could it be made better? Absolutely.

Ms. Laurie Scott: We'd like to see the apprenticeship system grow, and that's why we'd like the ratios changed.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Ms. Scott, I'm sorry, but the time has expired.

The third party has 17 minutes. Mr. Marchese.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I just want to congratulate those simultaneous translators there. I don't know how they do it because I often see people reading really quickly and I don't know how they keep up. I just don't know how they do that.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Do you want to call them to the front?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: They are good. Why do I say they're good? Because, as a French-speaking person, I know how tough it is just to do regular stuff, let alone simultaneously translating for us as we speed by these things. Congratulations.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Unbelievable.

On the classroom fees, Minister, before the election of 2003, Dalton McGuinty promised to scrap the classroom fees for apprentices, citing the belief that this fee was a disincentive to potential apprentices. Five years and another election later, the classroom fees for apprenticeship students still exist. The fees average, as you remember, \$400 a session, and in some cases apprentices take five in-class sessions, which means they could be paying up to \$2,000. Do you have any plans to get rid of that fee, by any chance?

1730

Hon. John Milloy: I could ask one of the officials to provide you with any technical background on the fee. But just to address it, broadly speaking, we've seen, and we've had a chance to discuss today, great success in terms of the increase in the number of people coming forward to be apprentices, and we're going to continue to work with the system and adopt strategies to encourage more people and make sure they're properly trained and move through.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Of course. But it was a promise the Premier had made, and I'm just wondering whether you intend to keep that promise or whether you're just moving on.

Hon. John Milloy: I'm not familiar with all the details of what you're referencing, but as I say, we're going to continue to enhance the apprenticeship system and

look at the strategies to move people into it and move through.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I appreciate that. It's just that Dalton, in 2003, said he was going to scrap those fees. He declared, and we agreed with him, that that fee is a disincentive to potential apprentices. I was just wondering whether you think that's a disincentive as well.

Hon. John Milloy: I'm not familiar with the quotation or the political part of your question. Again, in terms of the technical side, we have been impressed with the number of new registrants who have come forward.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I understand.

Hon. John Milloy: And we're going to keep looking at strategies to attract more young people and make sure they move through.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: You were elected in 2003, were you not?

Hon. John Milloy: I was.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: That was the promise that he made in that election. But it's probably a small issue; you're quite right.

Hon. John Milloy: I never said it was a small issue. I just said I'm not sure of the exact reference point you're making. There sometimes are differences of opinion when people bring it forward. I don't have the reference point, so we may have to get back to you, if you like. Again, I can't comment.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I'm not sure you can. It was a promise that was made by the Premier. Obviously, that fee is still there, and I was just wondering whether you have plans to remove it or not. You've commented enough on it, I think.

You talk about how proud you are of the apprenticeship training tax credit, because you say it encourages employers to take on more apprentices in the skilled trades, and I appreciate that. For companies that do take advantage of the apprenticeship tax credit, what criteria are required from them to be eligible to receive credit from the government? Maybe Mr. French would want to join us.

Hon. John Milloy: Or would it be—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Is it Mr. French?

Hon. John Milloy: Or would you prefer us to give you a written response?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Whatever is good for you is fine for me too. Monsieur French? Que pensez-vous? Whatever is practical.

Mr. Kevin French: Kevin French, assistant deputy minister, employment and training division.

The apprenticeship tax credit is for those trades that are available through construction, industrial manufacturing, motive power trades and some service trades. The administration of the apprenticeship tax credit is done through the Canada Revenue Agency, and they're administering the employer tax returns and determining eligibility for the apprenticeship tax credit. The Ministry of Finance is responsible for the apprenticeship tax credit legislation and it determines which trades are eligible. The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities is

responsible for the registration of apprentices and the promotion of the apprenticeship tax credit to employers who register apprentices in eligible trades.

So there are different parties involved in the apprenticeship tax credit.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Sure. Are there criteria, though? Are there criteria that are required of these employers to be eligible to receive the credit?

Mr. Kevin French: Yes, and they're administered by the Canada Revenue Agency, as I had mentioned.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: And they establish the criteria, or you, the ministry?

Mr. Kevin French: The legislation that would govern the program is done through the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: The registration is done through them, and the criteria are established by them or by you?

Mr. Kevin French: They're done by the Ministry of Finance. It's a program administered—the responsibility for it is with the Ministry of Finance. It's administered through the Canada Revenue Agency.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Right. I think I've got the three levels here. And someone has to establish the criteria by which they're eligible or not. I'm just trying to determine who establishes that. Is it you, the Ministry of Finance or the Canada Revenue Agency?

Mr. Kevin French: If I may, it's the Ministry of Finance.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Do you have the criteria?

Mr. Kevin French: I don't have the criteria here. I can—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Is it available to us?

Mr. Kevin French: Yes.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: So we can get that.

Hon. John Milloy: Yes.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Okay, good.

And in terms of the agreement the companies are asked to sign—I'm assuming there's a contract—finance does this, and maybe we can get a copy from them?

Mr. Kevin French: If I may, an employer has up to four years to claim the apprenticeship tax credit and can also file amendments to their tax return. So it's done through the tax system. It's the way the program is administered.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Sure. I understand. That's a different question, though. In terms of the agreement, that is signed with the Ministry of Finance, and there must be a contract or an agreement that they sign that is available, correct? There must be. If we could get hold of any agreement, that would be great.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Chair, point of order: I think the minister and staff really suggested this is a Ministry of Finance initiative. If the member, Mr. Marchese, requests that from the Ministry of Finance, that would probably be the most appropriate, I would think.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Mr. Rinaldi, it's the ministry that oversees this. When I ask questions, I'm not referred to the Minister of Finance to answer those questions; it's the minister who answers these questions.

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): Mr. Marchese has put the question. The minister can respond. If he has a document available, he can bring it forward; if he doesn't, then he can respond accordingly.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: It would seem to me, Mr. Rinaldi, that it would be appropriate for them to know what these agreements are, and if they know, we should know too. And if they have a copy, we should get a copy too.

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): We don't need to enter into debate. Let's continue with the question of the member and the minister.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Do you know if all the agreements are the same or do they vary from sector to sector?

Hon. John Milloy: Why don't we endeavour to get you an answer?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Thank you. And if they are different, maybe we can have different copies to look at.

Do you have any oversight mechanisms for companies taking advantage of the tax credit? And if so, what are they?

Hon. John Milloy: Perhaps you want to put these on the record, taking into account the points that have been made that there are limitations on what our ministry can do, because some of this involves other ministries. But we'd certainly be happy to get you as much information as we can.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Okay. What types of training are received by the individuals participating in the apprenticeship? Does that vary from sector to sector or is there a standard?

Mr. Kevin French: If I may: The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, through the employment and training consultants, is responsible for ensuring the terms and conditions of the contract of apprenticeship registered under the Trades Qualification and Apprenticeship Act or the training agreement registered under the Apprenticeship and Certification Act are adhered to and advise apprentices and employers or sponsors on contract terms and requirements of the regulations and guidelines specific to their trade, occupation or skill set. Under the TQAA this would include responsibility for ratios and wages. Monitoring can occur at any time of the year and can be formal or informal. I believe that answers your question about the oversight of apprentices who are involved in training.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: So the monitoring can be formal or informal?

Mr. Kevin French: That's correct.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: What does that mean?

Mr. Kevin French: That means the ministry staff can check informally through an approach that's—they can check with the individual apprentices in the workplace environment.

1740

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Do you think this informal approach sounds like a reasonable oversight? This informal approach doesn't seem to me very effective or efficacious. It doesn't—

Hon. John Milloy: Why do you say that? In the sense the approach is—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: This informal approach suggests that there isn't something that is systematic, that we don't oversee the contracts on a regular basis in terms of how they're functioning. They may or may not do this individual kind of thing with the apprentice. To me, it doesn't make any sense.

Hon. John Milloy: But the basis of the apprenticeship system is both on-the-job and classroom training, and then ending with an exam to demonstrate that you've learned those skills. So there's an experiential element; there's that relationship between the apprentice and the employer. We monitor that but, obviously, the writing of the exam and completing the qualifications and demonstrating the hours of work are what ultimately lead to that certification of being a journeyman.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: When I get to the example of Dell, we might have a better connection to how this informal mechanism works, or the formal one, for that matter.

As far as I understand, the company receives the credit on the basis of registration, not completion. That's correct?

Hon. John Milloy: Yes, it's based on registration.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Not completion?

Hon. John Milloy: Again, we'll get you the details on the tax credit as much as we can.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I hope the answer will satisfy what I'm asking; that is, it's based on registration, not completion. Would it be a worthwhile thing to say that you get the full credit if the person goes through, completes the program?

Hon. John Milloy: The credit—and again, I'll hand the microphone off to Mr. French—is only available for the first part of the apprenticeship. Is that correct?

Mr. Kevin French: The point I would like to emphasize is the fact that it's for training received. The apprentices are receiving both training in an experiential setting and in a school setting.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Right, sure. I understand that very clearly: for the training received. My other question is, the training received to completion? The point is not to completion, but rather whatever training he receives on the basis of half of the time or part of the time or a complete time? The point is, if you register, you get the money. That's what I think it is.

Hon. John Milloy: No. Again, I'll look to counsel here from Mr. French. The tax credit is available for the first part of the apprenticeship—correct?—for the first number of years. So someone comes in, enters into the system and works through the system for a number of years, then in the latter part there is no credit. Is that correct?

Mr. Kevin French: I'd like to take it up. We would be happy to table the guidelines.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: That would be helpful. We'll follow your answer and, presumably, whatever you table will be consistent with what you just said, Minister.

Hon. John Milloy: I take it I was correct in saying that in the latter years the credit does not apply?

Mr. Kevin French: The credit applies for the first four years, I believe. Employers have up to four years to claim. I'll stop there. I'm not sure I can answer—

Hon. John Milloy: Okay, we'll get you clarification, Mr. Marchese, and make sure I'm correct.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I think that would be helpful.

I asked you a question about apprenticeships in general, earlier, about whether or not we keep track of those who have completed apprenticeship. But in terms of the apprenticeship training tax credit, do we keep track of who completes those apprenticeships?

Hon. John Milloy: As we said, we'll get you information on the tax credit as much as we can, and take into account the questions you've put forward, and try to respond as best we can to them.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Are there any changes being planned by the ministry with respect to the criteria or eligibility? Or is everything going okay with that?

Hon. John Milloy: Again, I go back to my general comments about how we're working to strengthen the system. At the same time, though, we may be treading in water that is best left to my colleague Mr. Duncan, in terms of answering any specific questions on the tax credit. He's the minister responsible for it.

But, again, I go back to the fact that we're generally always trying to develop strategies to enhance the system and, obviously, in terms of the tax credit, my endeavouring to get back to you with information—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I got it; thank you.

Hon. John Milloy: We work very closely with the Ministry of Finance.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: How does the ministry ensure that a company is not registering the same people repeatedly? Is it possible that some people are applying more than once and then the company gets some money again for the same person? Do we know?

Hon. John Milloy: Well, obviously—again, we'll get you information on the credit and how it works. Your question is basically asking whether there are instances out there where people aren't following the rules. And one would hope not. One would hope that people would follow the rules.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I don't know. I'm just asking whether or not—

Hon. John Milloy: We'll get you as much information as we can.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Sure. I'm not quite sure whether the—because your answer could be, "No, we don't." I was just asking, is it possible that some people apply more than once? Is it possible? Do you know?

Hon. John Milloy: Well, I would hope not. And as I said, we'll get you some additional information on the subject.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Dell received more than \$11 million in tax credits from your government for jobs at an Ottawa-based call centre, and then cut and ran in the late spring, leaving 1,100 employees jobless and without the

necessary skills to compete. From the employees themselves, they've shared the fact that they've had minimal training and that the work they did at the call centre was not a skilled trade by any means. In terms of—

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): If you don't mind putting the question. We're just running out of time.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Yes. The reason I asked about oversight earlier was very specific to the Dell problem. What rigorous measures of oversight are in place to hold a company accountable in a situation like that?

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Chair, I'll be very quick.

I disagree very strongly with your characterization. I can certainly share—and I have, in the Legislature during question period—numerous quotes and examples of employers who were anxious to snap up Dell employees because of the skills they had, and Dell employees who were able to take those skills and transfer them forward. I know I've shared in the Legislature, and I'd be happy to table with the committee, the skill sets that were required through the training program and what the training program brought forward.

So I disagree very strongly with your characterization that these individuals were not taught skills; they were. In fact, Mr. Marchese, on a personal level, if you've ever called a call centre for help with a computer—I've always been amazed at the level of skill that someone has, who literally could be thousands of miles away, in terms of addressing my concerns.

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): We need to move on and try to stay on schedule. The government now has 17 minutes. We do have another vote happening. I might give advice—you might want to cut your time a little bit short. Then we could do the votes, and that way we don't have to call the minister and his staff back for what could be a formality.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Chair, just if we can get consent—I certainly agree with you, and if we get all-party consent, I would just wrap up with maybe a minute or so. If we have consent, then we'll allow the minister to say a few words, if he wishes, and then call for the vote.

Chair?

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): Oh, sorry, I was just speaking to Mr. Marchese. You just want to—

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I was saying I would just take a minute or so to wrap up and then we'll call for a vote, if we get consensus.

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): I see no objections. Go ahead.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Thank you. Let me just take the opportunity to thank the minister and his staff for being here today and trying, in a condensed version, to answer all the questions. I know they've taken and tabled some questions. I'm sure they'll give the appropriate answers.

Once again, I thank both the minister's staff and the ministry for their commitment and the great work they do in the ministry—and to you, Chair; this concludes another ministry.

Unless the minister has anything to say, we'll just call for a vote.

Hon. John Milloy: If I might, Mr. Chair, I'd like to thank you and thank the committee.

I'd also like to very publicly thank the staff at the ministry, from my deputy—acting deputy, as she likes to point out—on down for their work, both in preparation for this committee and now, for the hard part, going through all the various questions that have been put forward and gathering the material. I guess this is one time, as this comes to an end, where being minister is the easy part, because I don't have to go back and spend hours and hours rooting out the various facts and figures and statistics that have been asked for. Folks were even working through the lunch hour to start to pull that together, and we will endeavour to get as much information as possible to the committee. I really do want to thank them for their efforts on my behalf and also on behalf of the committee. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): Terrific; well put.

Seeing no further questions, I will now proceed to the vote for the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Shall vote 3001 carry? Carried.

Shall vote 3002 carry? Carried.

Shall vote 3003 carry? Carried.

Shall vote 3004 carry? Carried.

Shall the 2008-09 estimates of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities carry? It is carried.

Shall I report the 2008-09 estimates of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities to the House?

Interjections.

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): I heard “absolutely” and one “yes,” so that will be a “yes,” affirmative.

Let me just say to committee members that our final day of estimates for 2008 will be tomorrow, Wednesday, November 26. The Ministry of Energy will be before the committee beginning at 4 p.m., in this room again. So we will meet again for our last day, Ministry of Energy, 4 to 6 p.m. tomorrow.

To the minister, deputy minister and all the staff from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities who have been here and responding to our questions, we do thank you for your time and efforts in responding to members' queries.

Folks, have yourselves a good evening. We are now adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1750.

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