

# Committee Documents: - 1992-Oct-28 - Bill Pr70, Nipissing University Act, 1992

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Consideration of Bill Pr70, An Act respecting Nipissing University.

**The Chair:** We have now dealt with, I believe, all the outstanding bills with the exception of the one which was introduced yesterday, Bill Pr70. Ms Murdock.

**Ms Murdock:** Good morning. With me is Dr David Marshall, the president of Nipissing, and John Follis, who is the chair of the board of governors.

This is a bill that establishes Nipissing as a degree-granting institution. Right now it is a post-secondary institution and a university per se, but Laurentian University confers the degrees. This bill will give Nipissing the power to confer its own degrees.

At the request of some members of the committee, Jay Fleischer, from the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, and Frances Rowe, legal counsel for the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, are here, as are Stephen Hamilton, who is the president of the students' council at Nipissing University College, and Murray Green, who is vice-president of finance and administration. If there are any questions in regard to the contents of the bill, they are here to answer. Perhaps the president could cover it.

**The Chair:** Mr Marshall, would you like to speak to the bill?

**Dr David Marshall:** Only to indicate that this is a bill to establish a new university, but it's not done capriciously. This is done on the basis of 25 years of outstanding higher education in North Bay at Nipissing University College, 25 years of sound fiscal management and 25 years of academic excellence. I believe this bill will recognize those 25 years and will set up the conditions for another 25 years.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr Marshall. At this time, are there other interested parties present? None.

**Mr Hans Daigeler (Nepean):** This is obviously a different kind of private bill from the ones we just passed. In deference to the leader of the third party, perhaps he wants to make some comments first, but I have a number of questions I would like to ask as the critic for Colleges and Universities. I'm obviously pleased to see the university representatives here. I think the questions I will be asking arise out of an obligation towards the whole province and the implications of this decision for the university system as a whole.

I think this is a very significant moment. The way the system works here, sometimes important decisions get lost in the shuffle. I think this is one of them, so I do expect this to take a little

while. I also would like to ask Mrs Murdock, is there anybody here from the Ontario Council on University Affairs? I had requested that somebody be here to speak.

**Ms Murdock:** No, there is not. That is a body that advises the minister. It would be unprecedented for them to be called before this committee.

**1020**

**Mr Daigeler:** Well, I'll speak to that a little later. I don't know how you wish to proceed, Mr Chairman, but if Mr Harris wants to make some comments at this point, I have a fair number of questions. I don't know whether the members of the government have some questions. I'm in your hands.

**The Chair:** I think it's very generous of you to defer to Mr Harris. Mr Harris, do you have comments to make, as this is a significant move for your riding?

**Mr Michael D. Harris (Nipissing):** Very briefly, just to say that I appreciate the comments made by my colleague the critic for the Liberal Party on Colleges and Universities, and to indicate that he's quite correct: This isn't quite the same as some of the private bills we've dealt with this morning.

There has been wide consultation over a period of perhaps 10 years, significant involvement, unanimous support from the colleges and universities, from virtually every president of every university around the province, from the ministry, from the minister, from the parliamentary assistant, from all of those involved. I would not want the committee members to think that proceeding this way, by way of a Pr bill, means there have not been years of discussion, of analysis, of an understanding that this is in the best interests of education in northern Ontario, that this is in fact in the best interests financially for both Laurentian University and for Nipissing University. The fact that there are no objections but rather enthusiastic support from all of those universities, including Laurentian University, which Ms Murdock would represent politically in Sudbury, I think is unprecedented.

Obviously, this today is the culmination of years of sound management, years of excellent education, years of work, years of convincing over a period of time all those involved in the politics and the administration and the financing and the excellence of university education that this is truly in the best interests of all concerned.

I am pleased, obviously, to be here to support the bill. I believe it is quite appropriate that questions be raised and be responded to, quite confident that those questions have been asked throughout the years of process this bill has gone through and been answered by those experts along the way. Because it has proceeded by way of Pr bill instead of government bill, it might have been more appropriate to have a briefing ahead of time to answer the questions of the critic for the Liberal Party. However, I'm sure he will find the answers to his questions have been considered by all concerned.

I would appreciate consideration of all the questions, obviously. I would appreciate the committee understanding that this is not something that has been thrown together. This is something that has been worked on in a serious way for a number of years.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr Harris. Mr Fletcher, you had also a question --

**Mr Fletcher:** I have a few questions.

**The Chair:** Okay. Can we allow Mr Daigeler to go first?

**Mr Fletcher:** Sure.

**Mr Daigeler:** As I say, I'm flexible; at whatever point Mr Fletcher would want to put forward his questions and any other members of the committee. If I can ask some questions of the president first, then I would like to request that the ministry representative be prepared to answer some questions.

I think it is important that the discussion that is taking place is on Hansard. That's why I disagree with the leader of the third party that it would have sufficed to answer some of these questions I have privately. This is an important public matter and has to be publicly recorded. The only regret I have is that it is not discussed in the House. It might have been preferable to have this as a government bill.

In any case, let me ask Dr Marshall, could you tell us again, the committee members and the public, because I think we represent here the public, why you wish to do this and why the present arrangement is not satisfactory, and secondly, what you see as your mandate if this bill passes.

**Dr Marshall:** The most general answer to that question is that after 25 years, affiliation has outgrown its usefulness. Nipissing is 25 years old, and like any child that grows to 25, grows to maturity, there comes a time when it has to go out on its own. I think it's recognized at the current time by both Laurentian and Nipissing that it has reached that time for Nipissing to go out and carve out its own identity.

There are some very practical reasons, I think. Some of them are administrative convenience. We have reached the point where we have our total governance and operational structure in place and have had for a number of years. For us to have to work with an institution that's close to two hours' drive away is becoming a tremendous burden on both places. Nipissing has grown in size to the point where it's becoming difficult for Laurentian to handle. For instance, regarding the grade reporting of some of our students through the ministry, they would have to upgrade their computer system.

There are morale reasons; perhaps the president of the student council could address those. There are identity issues that just go with being an independent institution. Less obvious, I think, are the reasons that relate to the ability of Nipissing to pursue its own special mission or to carve out its particular role in higher education in Canada, in Ontario. The particular role and mission that Laurentian University might wish to carve out for itself may not necessarily match that of

Nipissing University College. That's quite correct and that's quite acceptable, but I think you could understand how the affiliation arrangement would certainly be in the way of Nipissing being able to pursue its own development paths.

There are some financial reasons why it's significant and important for us to go out on our own. Nipissing is proceeding into its very first capital campaign in the not-too-distant future, for instance, to raise money needed for its next addition. It becomes quite difficult for us to go out into the corporate world, after Laurentian's capital campaign, and go into a boardroom or to a chief executive officer and ask for money after Laurentian has just been there. I'm not sure all of them understand the subtleties of affiliation and how independent Nipissing is to this current time.

I think there are some tremendous benefits to the system in having a third independent university in the north. We're all well aware -- perhaps not aware -- of the tremendous youth migration out of northern Ontario. Anything we can do, even in the slightest way, that might both encourage a net migration into the north and encourage our students and our young people to stay in the north is a positive benefit to the system as a whole.

As you know from this act, Nipissing would be primarily limited to undergraduate degrees. We hope we would be able to attract undergraduate students from all around the world, who would then take part in the outstanding graduate programs Laurentian University has to offer.

We hope that we would be able to increase northern Ontario's image in higher education in an international sense. In that regard, Nipissing has already surpassed, in international development projects funded by the Canadian International Development Agency, both its partner Laurentian and other universities in Ontario. Not being independent is in the way of pursuing some of those independent international relationships.

To conclude, however, in a general sense, Nipissing has developed carefully and prudently over 25 years to the point where it is in fact functioning as a fully independent university operating in North Bay. It's done that through a supportive affiliation agreement, but that affiliation agreement and the nature of the bond between Nipissing and any one institution is in the way of the future development of higher education in northern Ontario.

**1030**

**Mr Daigeler:** As I indicated, some of the questions I'm putting forward I do out of my responsibility as critic on behalf of everyone in this province. I just would like your comments on remarks that are reproduced in the OCUA memorandum which I understand now has been given to all the members.

On page 23 -- I know this is somewhat dated; it is stated by the president of Laurentian in 1988, but nevertheless I think it is useful for you to respond to this since it does come from the mother university as it were.

In 1988, the president of Laurentian University, in response to OCUA's inquiry whether you should be given degree granting powers, had this to say:

"The proposal from Nipissing has more to do with civic pride in North Bay than any educational considerations. Civic pride can be a positive force, although most northern Ontario leaders now agree that the intense rivalry between cities that existed in the past probably hurt rather than helped the region's development.

"Now that projects based on pan-regional cooperation are multiplying, it would be ironic if one of the oldest examples of successful intercity collaboration in northeastern Ontario, namely the Laurentian University system, were to be dismembered."

I just would like to have your comments on these remarks.

**Dr Marshall:** For a start, it came from a letter that was the instantaneous reaction of the president of Laurentian University to the first thought that Nipissing might go on its own. That was three presidents ago at Laurentian University. I think it's fair to say that this particular letter was not the view of the Laurentian system; it was the view of that individual president at that time. Even since that letter was submitted, I've had personal discussions with that person and I think today he would take back some of the things he said in that document, certainly anything to do with competition, certainly recognizing the tremendous strengths that will come to both our institutions from being a partner rather than being in a subservient relationship.

That was, as I say, three presidents ago. It was based on the very first request, four years ago, made by Nipissing for a charter and since then, as Michael Harris has said, considerable work has been done, considerable scrutiny of all of those issues has been done by many groups, including OCUA and including the ministry.

**Ms Murdock:** If I might as well, part of the concern was the fact that there may be the taking of students from the different areas. Since that time in 1988, there has been a study done in terms of where the students who attend either Laurentian or Nipissing come from. Interestingly enough, they both draw students from their north-south corridor. Nipissing draws from the Highway 11 corridor and Sudbury draws from the Highway 69 corridor, so there isn't any of that kind of taking away of power.

**Dr Marshall:** Yes. To add to that, we did examine as part of the process where all our students come from and found out that -- I believe in 1990, the year OCUA did its visit -- in approximate numbers, out of 300 new students who came to Nipissing, only four came from the Sudbury region. The rest came from the highway corridor.

In addition, we discovered the myth about the transfer relationships between the two institutions. We found again that in 1991 out of close to 1,100 full-time students, 17 in any one year transferred over for some reason to Laurentian University, which was in fact much less than the transfers to other universities in the system.

**Mr Daigeler:** As you know, OCUA did a pretty exhaustive study of your request and I think it did very good work. That's why I really would have liked someone from OCUA here, because I think it can be looked upon as sort of an in-between body that provides what you may call neutral advice to the minister, yes, but I think to the public in general as well.

They recommended that you be given degree-granting status, but as a special mission institution. They are making this recommendation in the context of other applications that may be coming forward of a similar nature. They did a study on in what way, if at all, the university system should be expanded or not.

In those remarks, on page 9, they say that Nipissing College is not now and does not plan to be a university as defined in programmatic terms in advisory memorandum 91. This is an internal document of OCUA. Can you address this question or issue of special mission institution?

When I spoke with the minister a couple of weeks ago, I was left with the understanding that what he was supporting was OCUA's recommendation that you be given the specific mandate of a special mission institution and not a university in the broad sense. Does this statement on page 9 that you are not now and do not plan to be a university as defined in the OCUA documents still hold, and what is your comment on the recommendation by OCUA to establish you as a special mission with a limited mandate as a university?

**Dr Marshall:** First of all, Nipissing fully intends to be a fully functioning university. To explain and understand the statement that you've pulled out of the document, you should understand that the criteria OCUA is referring to and the document it's referring to is a previous document that OCUA sent out, proposing to the system some possible defining characteristics of what a university might look like.

Those criteria were their criteria. They were never accepted by the system and certainly, as I understand it, never accepted by the ministry as "the criteria." They were an individual's and OCUA's views as to what the criteria should be in terms of numbers of students and that kind of thing. In making that statement, OCUA had set up its own criteria and then said, "We don't intend to be a university because we don't meet their criteria." Well, there were some of their criteria that I think almost everybody disagreed with. So first of all, the criteria that they were establishing -- what they're referring to -- were not universally accepted definitions of what a university was or might be.

The second part of your question is that again, relating to my statement, we fully intend to be a fully functioning university. In fact, we are now, by criteria that have been accepted by the ministry, but a special one, as you've identified. There are two places in the act where that is made very explicit: one section where our special mission as a teaching oriented institution with a northern focus is identified, and two paragraphs later, where it's identified that our degree-granting power is limited to undergraduate degrees and a master's degree in education. Combined, those are very powerful statements about the kind of special mission an institution like ours might have and, I think, certainly fully comply with the intentions of OCUA in that regard.

This notion of the special mission is not something that is whimsical. It's not something that has been pulled out of a hat. This is what we've decided we are or we're going to be. The best way to decide and determine what something will look like in the future, in my view, is to look at its history and what it's been in the past. This defines what Nipissing is and has been. The best predictor of its ability to carry out that special mission -- and I could elaborate, for instance, how it is special in the area of teaching, how it's special even in the area of research, how it's special in the area of its relationship with its neighbour, the community college -- the best predictor of whether or not it will do that is its history.

**1040**

In addition, I think you should recognize, and I'm sure you do, that the process by which universities change is very burdensome and onerous. For instance, we have been officially approved through the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies, which examined us academically, very stringently, through the Ontario Council on University Affairs and through the minister for our master of education. That process took five years, at which time we were reviewed by external examiners, by OCUA, by the minister and so on. So the process by which change occurs, by which an institution could do something that might not fall within someone's vision of its defined special mission, is very difficult.

**The Chair:** Do you have anything further?

**Mr Daigeler:** That's the crux of the question. I will have some questions of the ministry because this is what concerns me: I hear you say quite clearly that at the appropriate time you will want to expand further, and that, I think, was not the intention of the recommendation by OCUA, nor did I think it was the intention of the minister when I spoke with him. But it remains to be seen what the ministry's reaction is and how it interprets this.

I think we are looking, and you seem to say this, at setting up a new university in the full sense of the word. That precisely raises a great number of questions that have a system-wide impact, and that's why I think I'm confirmed in my view that there are a lot of issues that arise out of this seemingly innocuous decision. But I appreciate your comments, and they are on record, and that's why it is important.

In OCUA's recommendation, it does say that you should be granted these powers, but on the understanding that you would give an undertaking to introduce specific measures to expand off-campus and distance education programs. Have you been looking at that as well? Is that something you agree with? Is there any specific undertaking you are making at the present time in response to this request from OCUA?

**Dr Marshall:** Yes. In fact, there are a couple of things in the report that are probably slightly out of date. Of course, one is that request to work with natives. We have done considerable work in that regard in the past few years. The other is in distance delivery. It should be noted that we currently deliver over 100 courses off campus annually, in places from Moosonee to Moose Factory to Wawa through Chapleau. So a good portion of our institution has in fact an incredible record of distance delivery and off-campus delivery.

What OCUA is referring to there is our intention on the arts and sciences side, the delivery of courses off-campus and distance delivery functioning. In that regard, we are having current discussions with some businesses in the north to look at the possibility of using some of their locations. It wouldn't be appropriate for me to name one at the current time, but one could possibly establish an electronic site where we will work with it to deliver courses onsite at its business.

We have created some special budget areas for the development of distance technology in our institution, and we've created some special incentives for faculty members to get involved in the delivery of their courses either through correspondence, distance delivery or some other such means.

**Ms Murdock:** If I might, I would like to respond. Mr Daigeler has been demonstrating a fair amount of reliance on the OCUA report, which is certainly important and was looked at by the minister, but the Ontario Council on University Affairs -- which OCUA stands for, for the benefit of Hansard -- is not involved in implementing government policy. It's not involved in the day-to-day operations of universities or of the ministry. They report directly to the minister, with advice and research in response to his particular requests. All decisions regarding Nipissing, in this instance, will be carried out by the Ministry of Colleges and Universities and not by OCUA.

They certainly are required and their expertise is needed for making recommendations, but there is no requirement on the minister to follow those recommendations. In this instance, the minister himself is in favour of Nipissing receiving the university status of conferring its own degrees.

**Mr Daigeler:** I have no further questions to the Nipissing representatives. I will have some questions for the ministry precisely along the lines that Ms Murdock just read from her briefing.

**Mr Fletcher:** Thank you for being here this morning. I was at Laurier when it changed its name from Waterloo Lutheran to Laurier, so I remember what it was like going through that.

You've been working with Laurentian for quite a number of years. You answered most of my questions when you were answering Mr Daigeler's, because I was just wondering what the difference will be if this goes through, if you've already been doing what you've been doing for such a long time. It just becomes official, right? Is that basically it?

**Dr Marshall:** I'll let Stephen answer some questions I haven't addressed, perhaps the emotional ones; I've tried to stick with the factual ones. It is a significant difference to us.

Again, I could go over the specifics of transportation and communication. I could give you all sorts of stories about how communications get lost, how Laurentian is supposed to represent us at provincial bodies, but we're independent. Laurentian sees us as independent; provincial bodies see us as affiliated. We've reached the point where it's so confusing to everybody that it really is appropriate that we go on our own.

Again, I've not tried to suggest that the relationships between Nipissing and Laurentian are unhappy. We have good relationships. However, we've reached the point where the relationships

could deteriorate, as often does when one person is kept in a subservient role when he or she is ready to not be subservient. We look forward with tremendous excitement to some very exciting partnerships with Laurentian, and we're into those already.

**Mr Stephen Hamilton:** Being a student at Nipissing, getting a charter would be an immense change for a student, a change for the better. Currently, what I try to do is promote student life on campus. The main one I'm looking at right now is varsity sports, a prime example of a strategic part of the university environment, no matter where you go. Unfortunately, at Nipissing, if I want to participate on the soccer team I have to travel two hours every day to practise with the Laurentian team and hopefully make the Laurentian team, because we have no varsity sports. There's also a stigma to student life on campus. It's not upbeat. You don't have 100 or 200 students converging on the gym every Saturday night for the basketball game, because there just isn't one. Student life will be enhanced at Nipissing through varsity sports, being able to receive your marks a few weeks after you write your finals instead of two months after writing your finals. It's a project that all the students are hoping will be encouraged and approved in the Legislature, and we're actively sitting on our hands, waiting to jump up in the air and say, "Thank God, it's finally here."

**Mr Fletcher:** I've been asking everyone. What is the word "Nipissing"? Is that a native word, a French word?

**Dr Marshall:** It's actually a native word and it stands for -- John, do you remember? Something to do with the meeting of two lakes.

**1050**

**Mr John Follis:** "The meeting place." It was the principal area on the old fur trade route coming in off the Ottawa-Mattawa river system through Lake Nipissing, French River, Georgian Bay.

**Mr Fletcher:** Do you know what language?

**Mr Follis:** I believe it's Cree.

**Mr Fletcher:** That would make it the first university with a native name in Canada, if that were to happen. I'm not sure; you'd have to check on that. When we were going with Laurier, we were trying to get them to make it a native name to make it the first, so I'm not sure.

**Ms Murdock:** In response to your former question, as a student I've been there. These students in North Bay go to school in North Bay, they benefit the economy in North Bay, they are part of life in North Bay, and then when they've graduated and finished all their courses they have to drive two hours to Sudbury to attend convocation and have the degrees conferred. Their degree then is on the wall saying it's a Laurentian University degree when probably they've never been on campus at Laurentian throughout the three or four years of their degree program. This will allow them to have their own name and their own conferring of degrees.

**Mr Fletcher:** We'll certainly be supporting this.

**Mr Follis:** I was going to add a personal anecdote. Going back a number of years, I had a friend who finally graduated with a teacher's certificate and decided to go to Laurentian University to receive that -- of course, all the education training and what not was done in North Bay -- because there'd be a great time: "Let's meet those recipients of degrees in Sudbury and we'll have a little party." One person. It's hard to have a spirit and a feeling for an institution after you've put in your three years, whatever the case may be, have to travel and one person shows up.

Also, I have two brothers who have Laurentian certificates on their walls and have never once been in the institution, other than to play basketball games because they're both very involved in basketball.

You talk about identity and feeling. You speak of Laurier, you remember those days. You know what I mean? There's a real identity you still hold on to. I think in future this will be something that will be very important with Nipissing. It is not the most important thing, but it is important to your student days.

**Mr Anthony Perruzza (Downsview):** Something that's always rather interested me, and it's been more often than not quite puzzling, is how universities and to some degree colleges as well become little worlds unto themselves. It's something, quite frankly, that has always bothered me.

I look here at the appointments to the board of governors. I know there are provisions for some community involvement through the appointment process, but it has been my experience with universities, both as a student and as someone who has lived in the proximity of one for the better part of my life, that universities do very little in terms of outreach to local surrounding communities.

They are a great and invaluable resource for communities generally in terms of the activities on campus and the resources they have at their disposal and so on, but there's very little outreach, there's very little involvement, there's very little volunteerism with respect to allowing local communities access to the facilities, to the resources, both recreation resources as well as academic and educational ones.

Quite often, that deficiency has resulted in the fact that on the boards of governors there are very few people from the immediate community who have a non-élitist community focus.

My question to you, and I know you can't solve a lot of these problems on your own, is how would you bridge that gap when you become a university, as I otherwise believe you should be?

**Dr Marshall:** Again, I think what you are in your history speaks for what you will become. Nipissing is known in North Bay as "the university that North Bay built" and it's treated that way.

I can give you numerous examples of how what you're describing just doesn't happen at Nipissing University College or Canadore Community College. For those of you who don't know, we share the same complex. You walk in the front door and you turn right to Canadore, or you turn left and go into the university. It's just not there.

I'll give you one, maybe two small anecdotes. We're involved in a long-term strategic planning process. We do things a little more slowly than most places. We're planning over three years to try to answer in some detail the kinds of questions that Mr Daigeler has raised. Just how are we special in a very operational way, not just in general terms and fuzzy mission statements, but just what are we? What makes us special?

We've completed a year and a half of that process, and to go into that process we invited the whole community to come, and the whole university. We have started it each year with a -- we call it a retreat -- at the university. We invite the whole community to come into the university and listen to a keynote speaker -- it was Stuart Smith last year; it was Peter George from the COU this year -- and to stay and go into working groups with us on Saturday, when we talk about the university.

One of the most exciting topics this year that we debated and examined was Nipissing as a university for the north, or just being in the north. This year out of 110 or 115 participants in our retreat on Friday night and Saturday, 45 of them, plus or minus, were people from the community who gave up their Friday night and their Saturday just to come and be there, to take part in the excitement of helping to plan their university. We put an ad in the paper: Anybody come. And they came. That's what surprises us. They come, they get excited and they take part.

So that's one small anecdote. It is a different place. Perhaps another one is the fact that our board currently is totally composed of people from our region, from Nipissing and the North Bay region.

**Ms Murdock:** As a northerner, I feel compelled to respond, because when Laurentian University, for instance, started it was when I was in grade 12 or 13. It consisted of four rooms in four different buildings throughout the city, and everybody working together to try -- John Sola knows full well, because he's from Sudbury as well.

It started out as a community thing. North Bay is the same. When you're living in northern Ontario and distances are so vast and communities are so far apart, you have no choice as a university -- or any educational facility, including our community colleges -- but to be diversified, to involve the community people, because you'll never get it off the ground if you don't involve the community.

The other thing is that you have to provide courses to the outlying areas, because they can't come in, in many instances. You have to have very diverse kinds of options that the people in the north can use. Even though this facility is situated in North Bay, the reality is that this university is one that is going to serve the entire area of northern Ontario.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms Murdock. Are there any further questions?

**Mr Sola:** I have to admit my bias or conflict of interest here, because I am a graduate of Laurentian from the days Ms Murdock mentioned when --

**Mr Daigeler:** A long time ago.

**Mr Sola:** That's right, before the birth of Nipissing, as a matter of fact. I remember attending classes above pool halls -- and dividing my time actually -- and beside the President Hotel and beside the Empire movie theatre and that. I recall those days.

But my question is, today, what is the stance of the community of Sudbury and of the Laurentian people vis-à-vis Nipissing getting its own charter?

**Dr Marshall:** I'll answer it first, and then maybe Sharon could. We work very closely with the university community certainly. I can't speak for the Sudbury community. Their official public stance has been for three years, since 1989, that if it happens, they're looking forward to a lifetime of working as partners with us. They certainly won't oppose it. I can understand why Laurentian would not come out, wave flags and say: "Nipissing, we can hardly wait until you leave. We would like to get rid of you." And they aren't doing that. They have approached it with equanimity, and they would certainly say, if they were here, that they have never had anything but respect for Nipissing's academic programs, its academic credibility. They recognize as well that Nipissing is currently almost twice the size that Laurentian was when Nipissing affiliated with it.

They understand how important universities are to their northern community, and I think they would tell you, as they have publicly in recent press releases, how much they're looking forward to a lifetime of partnering with Nipissing in higher education in northern Ontario.

**1100**

**Ms Murdock:** As far as the community is concerned, I don't think most of the community even realized that Laurentian conferred the degrees upon Nipissing graduates until the newspapers picked up this application story and it hit the Sudbury press. It had been in the North Bay Nugget, but it had not been in any of the Sudbury publications. Since then I have not had any calls to my office or any queries even when I'm out at public events. I think people realize that Nipissing has grown up and it's time to leave the nest.

**Mr Sola:** Knowing the competitiveness between the two communities, I think it may improve both facilities as well.

**Ms Murdock:** You weren't here earlier when I explained that a study showed that students are drawn from a north-south corridor rather than an east-west, so they're not going to be impinging on or taking from their student body and losing one way or the other.

**Mr Sola:** I just wanted to express my conflict of interest. I wanted to make sure I remained faithful to my alma mater in the way I vote.

**The Chair:** Mr Daigeler?

**Mr Daigeler:** I'll have a question for the ministry representatives.

**The Chair:** Could we allow some space at the table? For the purposes of Hansard, could you introduce yourselves?

**Mr Jay Fleischer:** I'm Jay Fleischer.

**Ms Frances Rowe:** I'm Frances Rowe, legal counsel to the Ministry of Colleges and Universities.

**Mr Daigeler:** Thank you for being here. I'm not sure whether you can answer all the questions, because some of them are of a political nature. In fact, I'm disappointed that neither the parliamentary assistant nor the minister is here, because again I want to emphasize the significance of this matter. But I will ask you, and inasmuch as you are a civil servant, as far as you can answer these questions will be appreciated.

Can you tell me how this initiative fits in with the ministry's system-wide planning? How does having the new university at Nipissing fit in with your long-term vision for the university sector and post-secondary education in general in the province of Ontario?

**Mr Fleischer:** Given the increasing lack of resources and the need to make the most productive use of them, the ministry has established a task force on restructuring. One of the conceptual frameworks within which that operates is the need to have institutions which are not all things to all people, and the development of institutions that enhance diversity within the system is one of the long-term goals. So the development of Nipissing as a university that is not expected to be all things to all people but is expected to serve a particular niche in the post-secondary system is consistent with the long-term planning of the ministry.

**Ms Murdock:** And part of the long-term --

**Mr Daigeler:** I'm not sure, really, whether Ms Murdock is qualified to answer these questions. Do you have any affiliation with the Ministry of Colleges and Universities?

**Ms Murdock:** Other than being involved in this and being briefed on it, quite a bit, actually.

**Mr Daigeler:** You have every right to respond, but I really wonder whether you can take the place of the parliamentary assistant for Colleges and Universities. You are the member for Sudbury and you're the sponsor of the bill, but I think that's the limit of your qualifications on this matter, is it not?

**Ms Murdock:** I would hope that wouldn't be the limitation. I'm quite familiar with the policies this government has been advocating in terms of the long-term strategies we're planning in education, particularly having been a teacher for 13 years.

One of the things we're looking at is trying to integrate the community college and university systems so they are more meshed within each of the communities. I would say this aspect of Nipissing is unique to the entire province, because it is the only physical plant that is connected with both the community college and the university system. They not only share space in terms

of gymnasiums and that kind of equipment, but they also have greater ease of transfer of students. In fact, because of their physical application, they end up showing transferred students from college to university and from university to college to a greater degree than anywhere else in the province. So it fits in really well with our political strategy of joining community colleges and universities more effectively, which is one of our thrusts.

**Mr Daigeler:** Getting back to Mr Fleischer, you indicated -- that frankly, I support -- that this project responds to filling a particular need, Nipissing carving out a niche which could be addressed in the context of the limited resources we have overall. In view of what you just said, how do you react to what the president of Nipissing College said a little earlier in response to some of my questions, where he said they certainly look at this as being set up as a university in the full sense of the word?

Second, are you satisfied that section 4 in the bill, which talks about the special mission of the university, responds sufficiently to the mandate the ministry envisions for Nipissing?

**Mr Fleischer:** In answer to your first point, I think what OCUA was talking about needs to be defined. Just for purposes of informing the committee, when it talked about a university in the full sense of the term, it was talking about an institution that had unlimited degree-granting power, whose mission was the standard university mission of advancement of learning etc. In that sense, that defined a university. A special mission university would be one whose degree-granting powers were somewhat more restricted and whose mission was somewhat less than simply the advancement of learning. In that sense, there is no inconsistency.

Could you remind me of your second question?

**Mr Daigeler:** Whether you feel -- I presume you do, but I'd just like to see this on record -- that the special mission and the way it is described in the bill -- perhaps I should read it:

"Special mission

"4. The university's special mission is to be a teaching-oriented institution that offers programs in education and in liberal arts and science and programs that specifically address the needs of northern Ontario."

Does that satisfy your understanding of the limited mandate of this new university?

**Mr Fleischer:** I'm not exactly sure what you mean by satisfying me. It is a mission totally unique from other universities and much more restrictive than that of other universities. In that sense, it is a special mission, and the minister is happy with it.

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**Mr Daigeler:** I make, as you noted, extensive use of the work that was done by OCUA. Even though Ms Murdock is trying to downplay the significance of OCUA, I think she is false in doing this.

**Mr Perruzza:** On a point of order, Mr Chair: I've been listening really closely now for quite some time to Mr Daigeler. Despite some of the unparliamentary language he may be using to make some of his points, I can't see where the heck he's going with his questioning and what he's trying to get out.

**The Chair:** The point of order raised is not a point of order.

**Mr Perruzza:** Mr Chairman, I think you have to make a decision on the word "false." Is it parliamentary language, yes or no? That's what I was raising. I said that, Mr Chair.

**The Chair:** That's certainly a valid point, Mr Daigeler.

**Mr Daigeler:** What is a valid point? What was incorrect? I certainly maintain that the attempt to downplay the significance of OCUA by Ms Murdock is incorrect.

**The Chair:** When you use the word "incorrect," you are then withdrawing the earlier word?

**Mr Daigeler:** I said "false." If that offends you, then I certainly will withdraw that.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr Daigeler. I think "incorrect" is probably --

**Mr Daigeler:** Fine. I think OCUA continues to serve a very important and useful purpose, and it's done extensive work on this matter. Therefore, in the interests of the public and in the interests of Nipissing, I think it's very important that some of these questions that were raised by OCUA are answered and are answered satisfactorily. I think that's our role as a committee, despite what Mr Perruzza may believe.

**Ms Murdock:** I've never said anything other than that, Mr Daigeler.

**Mr Daigeler:** Could I ask a question that was noted on page 19 of OCUA? It says, "At this point, it should be noted that autonomy for Nipissing College would fundamentally alter and possibly destabilize the Laurentian University system." What is your comment on that? In particular, what is your answer to this suggestion and what is the impact of the decision we're making today, or at least on second reading, for Algoma and for Hearst College?

**Dr Marshall:** I have the OCUA document in my bag, and I can pull it out, but I think you'll find it circled and highlighted and almost memorized. The document has been given incredible scrutiny by me, as president presenting this bill, and by the ministry and the ministry staff. We've sat down and looked at every sentence in it. There are sentences in it that, quite frankly, from my point of view, are strictly conjecture. This is one where there doesn't seem to be even the slightest shred of evidence. There isn't any evidence; in fact, there's considerable evidence of strengthening, but that's another matter.

You ask about Algoma and Hearst and the others. I think the fact is --

**Mr Daigeler:** Mr Chairman, my question was really to the ministry representatives. I understand your views on the matter, but you will understand that you have an interest in this matter. That's why I think OCUA has to be responded to. It has a sort of an in-between view. I want to hear from the ministry how it perceives this suggestion, because it has an obligation to look at the whole system. Even in OCUA they're not saying that this is what's going to happen; they're saying it may. So I just want to have an answer from the ministry as to what its response is to this.

**Mr Fleischer:** I am not aware of any evidence which would be in support of that allegation. With respect to Algoma and Hearst, the ministry would consider any application from any other affiliate on its own merits and would make a decision on its own merits. A decision on one does not have any link to what the minister may or may not decide with respect to an application from any other affiliate.

**Mr Daigeler:** That's fair enough. That's what I was --

**The Chair:** Further question, Mr Daigeler?

**Mr Daigeler:** Yes. Again, in the OCUA recommendation, it supports the application under the conditions I already mentioned. They also say Nipissing College should undergo a quality appraisal as recommended in the standard OCUA process. Was that quality appraisal carried out, and if not, why not?

**Mr Fleischer:** In point of fact, all Nipissing programs undergo quality appraisal and have to be approved by the Laurentian senate, and the minister noted that.

In addition, the graduate program to which Dr Marshall referred underwent a very comprehensive and onerous assessment process involving the advisory committee, the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies, the Ontario Council on University Affairs and the ministry. So all Nipissing's programs have undergone an academic appraisal, and therefore the minister saw no point in establishing a process -- and I would note that right now there is no system-wide undergraduate appraisal process. A system-wide process exists only at the graduate level. Nipissing has undergone the same academic appraisal requirements as all other universities.

**Mr Daigeler:** So you did not accept OCUA's recommendation. They "reserve judgement until a more authoritative reading of faculty qualifications, research output, academic standards, program content and academic governance can be rendered by a properly qualified committee of peers." You did not accept that recommendation.

**Mr Fleischer:** The minister chose to proceed on the basis that he indicated, as he did publicly in a letter in his response to the chairman of council, that with respect to Nipissing, he felt he now had enough information with respect to the academic quality of its programs to proceed.

**Mr Daigeler:** I see. Why would you think the minister felt that way and OCUA didn't?

**Mr Fleischer:** I would be assuming what was going through the minister's mind. I can only point out to you my knowledge of the assessment and appraisal process, and the fact that Nipissing has been in existence for 25 years and has undergone comprehensive appraisals of its programs. It's not a case where none of its programs had been appraised and that the ministry had no knowledge of what the quality or lack of quality might be of its programs. The Laurentian senate had it tested at the undergraduate level to the quality of all of its programs and was willing to give Laurentian degrees for completing those programs.

**Mr Daigeler:** Thank you. I'm getting to the end of my list of questions.

Again, in the OCUA recommendations, when it talks about differentiation of the university system, which it supports, it is also talking about the accompanying differentiation of funding. Given that this is, I guess, a move in the direction of a differentiated university structure, are you looking also at differentiated funding, or is that not under consideration?

**Mr Fleischer:** I'm not aware of what the outcomes of all the exercises currently under way will be. The decision on this particular act does not pre-empt any decisions that may be forthcoming from those exercises.

**Ms Murdock:** Mr Murray Green actually is the financial administrator for the board, so perhaps he would have the information Mr Daigeler requires.

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**The Chair:** I also advise Mr Fleischer and Ms Rowe that there's no obligation on you to answer any questions that relate to future intent or policy if that puts you in a compromising position.

**Mr Murray Green:** Just a simple comment: Nipissing University has been a fully funded partner in the Ontario university system for a long time. On a financial basis, the decision made today or in the future will have no bearing on cost; you mentioned cost earlier on. As I say, we are currently a fully funded partner and there will be absolutely no change once we have the charter in the future.

**Mr Daigeler:** I guess this is outdated, although sometimes insights have to take a while to mature.

Perhaps a final question: In 1982, OCUA suggested moving in a totally different direction, and that was to establish a northeastern university which would have campuses in different places. Has this concept been totally abandoned? With this initiative we're discussing today, is that the final nail in that coffin?

**Mr Fleischer:** I wasn't around when the 1982 advice came in, and I don't know what the response to it was.

**Ms Murdock:** And frankly, I don't think it would be for him to say.

**Mr Daigeler:** It goes back to my initial question and to the concern that we, and particularly the minister must address in the ministry, what is the long-term vision for the university development in this province, and does this particular project help that vision or hinder it. It's in that context that I want your remarks on that matter.

**Ms Murdock:** Mr Chair, I already answered that question, I believe.

**Mr Perruzza:** On a point of order, Mr Chair.

**The Chair:** Mr Perruzza, under what standing order?

**Mr Perruzza:** Redundancy. I believe the standing orders clearly stipulate that you can't repeat the same argument. Maybe you can get away with it once, twice, three times, four times, but when you get to six, seven, eight and nine, then it's redundant, and I think you can rule on that, Mr Chairman. He keeps asking the same question over and over again.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr Perruzza. I think the central question Mr Daigeler puts may have been phrased before. However, it's such a general question that the ministry officials are also not obliged to respond to it. Mr Fleischer.

**Mr Fleischer:** I'm not sure what I can add to what I've already said.

**The Chair:** Thank you. Mr Green.

**Mr Green:** Just another simple comment: It was pointed out earlier that we share a campus with Canadore College. We are very unique because there is a large number of central services we share. In so doing, I think we can provide a better value for the dollar in terms of education and perhaps can be a model to other institutions in the future. I think I'd stop there.

**The Chair:** Mr Daigeler?

**Mr Daigeler:** No further questions.

**The Chair:** Any other questions? Are we then ready for a vote on Bill Pr70? Are there any outstanding issues regarding any of the sections, Mr Daigeler or any other members?

If we are ready for a vote, shall sections 1 through 42 carry? Carried.

Shall the preamble carry? Carried.

Shall the bill carry? Carried.

Shall I report the bill to the House? Agreed.

**Mr Fletcher:** I'd like to move that the fees and the actual costs of printing at all stages and in the annual statutes be remitted on Bill Pr70, An Act respecting Nipissing University.

**The Chair:** Mr Fletcher moves a waiver of fees. All in favour? Fees are waived.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms Murdock, Mr Green, Dr Marshall.

**Ms Murdock:** This is a historic moment. Thank you.