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*\*(Ce discours est bilingue)*

**Department of Education**

**Hon. Mr. Lamrock,** after the item under the Department of Education had been presented: It gives me great pleasure to stand today for the second time as Minister of Education to present the capital budget estimates for the Department of Education. I am joined by my officials today, and I would like to recognize them in the House. We have with us the deputy minister on the Anglophone side, John Kershaw.

Le sous-ministre du côté francophone est Roger Doucet.

We also have with us, from our financial administration office, Liz Abraham, and J.P. Boudreau, from our planning department. I am in T.J.’s seat. Mr. Chairman, in order that I can actually have one deputy on either side, I have moved over one. May I have consent to speak from a seat other than my own? Thank you.

I want to present the 2008-09 capital budget estimates. In *When kids come first,* we made a

commitment to build the best education system in Canada, en route to a self-sufficient New

Brunswick. Obviously, our first priority always has been and always will be classroom education. There is no doubt that it does no good to build buildings if we are not teaching kids to read, write, do math, and learn science. We continue to know that we have to do better in areas of literacy and numeracy. As always, our first priority is going to be to continue to have record investments in classroom education, so that the school system does its first job of teaching kids to read, write, and do math.

That being said, I want to note that we also know we have a challenge in many communities with the quality of our schools, and we have to continue to invest in schools that are safe and healthy places for teachers to teach. That is why I want to give a little historical context. I have noticed that a great deal has been said in the newspapers about the size of this year’s capital budget, so I want to offer a brief history lesson to put this year’s capital budget into context. In the first year of the previous government, it had a capital budget of $34 million. In 2001-02, it followed up with a capital budget of $34 million. In 2002-03, it had a capital budget of $34 million, and in its fourth year in office, it had a budget of—this one is bigger—$35 million. In fact, other than a deathbed repentance prior to the previous election, it is worth noting that, most years, the capital budget was below $40 million under the previous government. Even with the preelection spending spree, the average budget under the previous government, on the capital side, was $41.3 million. We strive for excellence in the classroom, but we still have to be above average on the capital side. That is why I am pleased to announce that this year’s capital budget is higher than average, at $41.6 million. Furthermore, we have a number of innovative funding arrangements that will allow us to get even more schools.

(Interjections.)

**Mr. Chairman**: Members, the Minister of Education has the floor.

**Hon. Mr. Lamrock**: I know that it is hard to wait, just like at Christmas, but I think some projects here should bring some smiles to faces on both sides of the aisle. This $41.6-million investment on the capital side is a higher-than-average amount. It will also allow us to undertake some important, important projects. An amount of $24.7 million will be invested in 10 major projects. This year’s capital improvement budget is a total of $15.9 million, and we will fund 121 projects. I will not list them here, and I am sure I will have agreement that we will provide a list of those projects.

(Interjections.)

**Hon. Mr. Lamrock**: Yes, my friend from Edmundston can have a guarantee that I will not list them all here, but I will say that we will have some opportunities to do some things that needed doing. I am happy to tell the Minister of Finance that Polyvalente Louis-J.-Robichaud in Shediac—Cap-Pelé is finally getting that auditorium, and I am happy to tell the folks in Marysville that, after a long time of waiting for that order, they are finally getting the new windows so that the school will not be so cold in Marysville.

What I want is the chance to talk about some of the major projects that are contained in this year’s capital budget.

Comme vous le savez, nous avons pris l’engagement d’améliorer notre système d’apprentissage dans les arts industriels. Dans le district 1, cette année, on va dépenser 2,4 millions de dollars pour ajouter l’atelier pour l’art industriel à l’intérieur de l’école Sainte-Anne et pour terminer les rénovations à cette école importante de Fredericton. Avec l’ouverture récente de l’école des Bâtisseurs, il y a maintenant 634 élèves à l’école Sainte-Anne.

J’aimerais également annoncer que ce projet d’investir dans les arts industriels est un partenariat avec le gouvernement fédéral. J’aimerais remercier le gouvernement fédéral pour ce partenariat dans ce projet important.

I want to talk a little bit about School District 2, in the Moncton area. As you know, there has been recent talk . . . I heard my friends from Dieppe and Kent South mention that Clément-Cormier had been in the Premier’s riding for a full year. We will have news about Clément-Cormier, which they will know about before this is over. However, a school in a former Premier’s riding had been on the priority list since 2001, in the riding of Moncton East. When the current member for Moncton East was first elected, in the very first conversation that we had, he said: I have to get you down to Moncton High School. I had a tour, and I agree with him. While it is an important part of Moncton’s heritage and we have to preserve that building, that school is in unacceptable condition. There continue to be rooms that are falling apart. There are some areas that are inappropriate for education. We know that we need to start now. That is why we are not going to wait six years to deal with Moncton High School. I am pleased to announce that we are starting this year with $500 000 to begin planning a major multiyear renovation of Moncton High School. We are looking forward, this year, to addressing code issues, such as sprinklers and exit staircases, with possible additions to the library and a broad-based laboratory. However, make no mistake: This is a multiyear commitment, so that we can make sure that Moncton High School continues to be a jewel in the heart of Moncton and a high school where kids can learn.

Also, I know that my friend, the Minister of Health, and my colleague from Moncton Crescent have both spoken eloquently and correctly about the need for a new high school in Moncton North to deal with overflow. It is a good problem to have. In fact, Evergreen Park School has more students than it was built for. Indeed, we would like more of our communities to have that problem—they are growing too big with too many young families. That was why, last year, I said that it was hard in the current fiscal climate. I needed folks to wait one more year. I am pleased to announce that, this year, that commitment will be kept. The government is going to undertake a public-private partnership, a P3 initiative, for the construction of a new school on the North Side of the city of Moncton.

This year, it is also worth noting that we will be launching more schools than the size of the capital budget may indicate. Last year, I said: Indeed, our infrastructure needs had grown due to neglect over many years of governments. It had grown so intense that it was going to take creative funding arrangements to make sure that we could somehow rebuild our crumbling infrastructure in our schools. If we waited for government to tax and spend its way to fix up every school that needed it, frankly, 20 years of government neglect had us in too deep. That was why we had to pursue innovative funding arrangements. This year, we will commence the process with the Department of Supply and Services to do a public-private partnership. These already exist in the school system. They exist right now at Leo Hayes High School and at Evergreen Park School, and they have worked well where they have happened. People are happy and satisfied with the service that they have.

There are good reasons to do a P3. It allows us access to funds more quickly, and, in years like this, it allows us to build even more schools and start more projects than available funds would otherwise dictate. Also, they transfer the risk away from the taxpayer to private companies. Under a P3, a private company has to commit . . . It will build on our educational specs and on our educational guidelines, around what we deem to be in the public interest. Make no mistake about that. They commit to the cost. They commit to the timeline, and, if there are overruns, the company, and not the taxpayers of New Brunswick, will be on the hook.

Further, we believe that the increased use of public-private partnerships will allow us to make sure that maintenance has been done, just as was announced by my colleague the Minister of

Transportation, with the asset management program. P3s tend to have a better record of taking the politics out of maintenance and making sure that schools are fixed when they need it, to keep them healthy and safe for the long term, rather than waiting too long. I look forward to making sure that we use these innovative arrangements to fix a problem that has

been here too long, and we start by giving the folks in Moncton North the school they deserve.

Dans le district scolaire 3, nous avons aussi un grand défi. Je me souviens, quand nous sommes arrivés au Cabinet, mon collègue de Grand-Sault m’a dit : Il faut aller rénover l’école à Drummond en premier. Elle est près d’une route majeure au Nouveau-Brunswick. Elle est trop petite, et le gymnase est trop vieux et trop petit pour que les enfants puissent suivre un programme de bien-être. Ils doivent aller au sous-sol d’une église à l’heure du dîner. Il y a eu plusieurs demandes, mais, malheureusement, l’ancien gouvernement a attendu sept ans. Je savais bien qu’ils avaient attendu 10 ans sous un gouvernement et 7 ans sous un autre. L’année dernière, je leur ai dit avec regret : Donnez-nous un an, et nous trouverons une solution. J’aimerais dire à ma collègue que nous avons encore tenu notre parole et que nous allons dépenser 1,3 million de dollars dans la planification et le design du projet à Grand-Sault.

Finalement, on va commencer à bâtir une nouvelle école à Drummond et beaucoup de nouvelles écoles dans la région de Grand-Sault. Au total, ces projets toucheront 1 500 élèves de la maternelle à la 12e année et six écoles dans la région de Grand-Sault, ce qui inclut l’école Académie Notre-Dame qui a fermé ses portes en septembre 2006.

Dans le district scolaire 5, il y a deux projets importants. Premièrement, on sait bien qu’il y a du travail à faire dans une autre école qui a attendu trop longtemps. Je suis content d’annoncer que l’on va dépenser 300 000 $ cette année dans la planification architecturale d’un projet à la polyvalente Roland-Pépin. Cette école regroupe 560 élèves de la 7e à la 9e année.

J’aimerais parler d’un autre projet qui touchera la circonscription de mon collègue des Ressources naturelles. Comme je l’ai dit l’année dernière, une des raisons que l’on a demandé la planification à long terme de cinq ans dans les districts, c’est parce que les gouvernements ont négligé nos écoles et nos infrastructures pendant 20 ans. On va trouver des solutions créatives, puisqu’il y a des écoles qui sont à demi-vides et qui sont trop âgées. Il faut se rassembler pour avoir une bonne école, une école communautaire, une école bâtie avec de nouvelles normes, une école prête pour la nouvelle technologie et l’apprentissage.

Mon collègue a travaillé avec les maires des quatre collectivités de sa circonscription. Je veux

mentionner que les maires d’Eel River et de Balmoral sont ici aujourd’hui. Je suis très content que les municipalités de la région de Dalhousie se soient rassemblées pour dire qu’elles veulent une nouvelle école et qu’elles en auront une qui sera presque la meilleure dans la province. Cette année, on a dit qu’on allait travailler avec vous, et on va accorder 200 000 $ pour la planification d’une nouvelle école communautaire. Cette nouvelle école, au sommet de nos écoles, sera dans la région de Dalhousie. Oui, nous travaillons tous ensemble pour planifier la meilleure école possible. J’aimerais remercier mon collègue, le ministre des Ressources naturelles, et les maires des collectivités pour leur leadership dans ce projet important.

In District 8, this year, there was a school that was very important. I know that the Minister of

Supply and Services has been waiting to hear me say it, so let’s get right to it. The government will spend $3.1 million to construct a new Bayside Middle School. This project will consist of preparation and adding a gym, an elevator, and renovations to the existing building to renew that building. The total project will be $5 million. I am happy to say that, in September 2010, we expect that the kids at the Bayside school will have a new-looking school to go into.

Ce projet a déjà été annoncé, mais j’aimerais confirmer que, cette année, nous n’attendrons pas cinq ans, comme ce fut le cas pour la Moncton High School, pour faire des rénovations à une école qui en a besoin. On a dit l’année dernière : Donnez-nous un an de plus, et nous aurons une bonne solution pour les enfants de l’école Clément-Cormier. Tel qu’annoncé par le premier ministre, on va dépenser 4 millions de dollars cette année dans les travaux de rénovations pour l’intérieur et pour l’extérieur de l’école Clément-Cormier.

In District 15, this year, we will be spending $1 million in order to start a renovation project at Sugarloaf Senior High School. For a long time, when I was up there visiting, I would hear directly from students and from the Member of the Legislative Assembly that the school needed to expand its cafeteria to give itself a proper social space—a cafetorium for the performing arts. This meant adding a stage and making sure that it had a proper sprinkler system. This year, we will spend $1 million to start that work and give the kids at Sugarloaf Senior High the cafetorium they have been looking for.

In District 16, we have determined that we will build a new school in the Rexton area, in order to upgrade, along community specifications, Eleanor W. Graham Middle School. This will be our second public-private initiative, and I am proud to announce that we will begin work this year to accommodate 300 students in a new Eleanor W. Graham Middle School, in the Rexton area, in District 16. I hear my colleague asking, just so people will not think I am talking to myself. That is the second public-private initiative right now. They can ask me this if they want. As they may know, public-private partnerships work this way. We put out a tender, and the construction company actually worries about how much it will build it for. It offers us a lease arrangement. Actually, that is why this works so well. I heard my colleagues opposite complaining about the size of the capital budget. Not only was it bigger than their average capital budget, not only was it bigger than in five out of seven Conservative years, but it is also worth noting that, because of the innovative funding arrangement, we can build more schools by transferring the risk to the private sector and by getting capital up front. That is the important part. That is how you build schools more quickly—by being creative instead of waiting for the old ways to kick in.

In District 18, I am pleased to announce that the government will continue to invest in new schools. I know that my colleague from Southwest Miramichi has worked hard to bring communities together, and the communities themselves deserve credit for finding a collaborative solution to give their kids the best possible school, putting what is best for kids ahead of what is necessarily comfortable for adults. That kind of community leadership deserves to be recognized and funded. That is why there will be a new facility housing 350 students from Grades 6 to 12 between the communities of Boiestown and Doaktown. This year, I am happy to say, Rick, you got $4 million to give the kids that school in the Upper Miramichi. Of course, we said that we would make sure we met our target date of September 2009 for a replacement for Albert Street Middle School on Kimble Road. We will meet that target date. We will make sure we transfer the history and traditions of Albert Street Middle School to a new middle school that offers expanded opportunities for recreation and offers the very best, because our kids deserve nothing less. This year, we will spend $8 million completing the new middle school in District 18 on Kimble Road, and it will be open in September 2009. I know that that news will please the Leader of the Opposition, who pushed so hard to get that school on Kimble Road.

In the end, this is an important capital budget. We continue to be dedicated to excellence in the classroom, but we have managed to be ahead of the average of previous governments in this year’s capital budget. Also, through creative financing, we are allowing districts to build schools more quickly, so that we can begin to chip away at the results of 20 years of negligence of our school infrastructure.

I also want to update the House briefly on some equally important notes. We are beginning to complete our review of school standards. The way we build schools is important, and it has not changed in a long time. The way we build schools says a lot about what we expect. It says a lot about the importance we place on recreation or industrial arts. It says a lot about how we expect teachers to teach.

I had a chance to visit Finland, a jurisdiction that is often at the top, among the global leaders in education. It is interesting to see how their schools are built. Not only are they up-to-date with the latest technology, but it is interesting to see how the schools are built to support the kind of teaching we have been supporting through the Innovative Learning Fund. Classrooms often have open walls so that students can easily collaborate. Their hallways are full of books, computers, and working areas, because they encourage the kind of hands-on, collaborative teaching we are trying to encourage. These are the kinds of best teaching practices that we know are doing the best on the PISA evaluations, and they will help us to do well.

That is why these schools that I have announced this year will be built under the new standards. They will have the kinds of open learning areas that we see in other jurisdictions that encourage quality teaching. They will be updated to take the latest technology, which many old schools cannot do. They will meet the kinds of standards that we have talked about for community space, so that all our schools can involve the community and offer services beyond the school day to broader communities. They will be schools that reflect what we want for recreation, what we want for technology, and what we want to make every school a community school. It is not just about the numbers. It is also about how well we work to make sure that the buildings that we build are done quicker, that they are done with minimal risk to the taxpayer, but, most importantly, that they support the learning we want our kids to have. That is what it means to ensure that kids come first. It is not only about the capital budget, it is about supporting what happens in those schools. That is the commitment that we make. That is what this capital budget is going to be about, and that is what they will all be about.

I will make a copy of the projects available to the opposition, and I look forward to answering questions.