



# Hansard Official Report of Debates

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

38th Parliament

**JOHN YAKABUSKI, M.P.P. - RENFREW-NIPISSING-PEMBROKE**

Member's Statement

February 22, 2005

**Mr. Speaker:**

**Over the last few weeks I have had the opportunity to attend a number of meetings held in my riding with respect to the possible closure of seven public schools.**

**They are: Calabogie Public School**

**Alexander Reid Public School**

**Ross Mineview Public School**

**Horton Public School**

**Keys Public Schools**

**Laurentian Public School and**

**Morison Public School**

**Mr. Speaker, hundreds of people have attended these meetings to voice their views on the impact this will have on their children, their neighbours and their entire**

**community. The Minister of Education has made a big deal about his purported support for rural schools. The fact is, he had paid lip service and nothing more to the concerns of rural school board and parents.**

**Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the McGuinty Government has turned its back on rural Ontario. Such things as lack of support for farmers, or denying rural municipalities their fair share of the gas tax, clearly sends a message that rural Ontario is not a priority for the Liberals.**

**The attitude of this government leads to declining enrollment in our schools, which is the number one reason rural schools are hurting badly as they struggle to meet ministry occupancy targets.**

**Speaker, the Minister must know that for many rural families their school is the centre of their community. I encourage him to act swiftly to amend the funding formula for rural schools so that our local board will not have to close these schools, thereby causing much pain and suffering to rural children, families and communities.**