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STANDING COMMITTEE ON PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS

Chairman:

**Mr. J. Wally McKenzie
Constituency of Roblin**



Wednesday, October 24, 1979 10:00 A.M.

**Hearing Of The Standing Committee
On
Privileges and Elections**

Wednesday, October 24, 1979

Time: 10:00 a.m.

CHAIRMAN, Mr. J. Wally McKenzie.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Committee come to order.

I call Mr. Tim Sale of the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg.

MR. TIM SALE: Mr. Roy Warman of our Board, Mr. Chairman, will present our brief and either of us will be glad to respond to your questions. May I introduce Mr. Warman now?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Right.

MR. ROY WARMAN: For over 60 years, the Social Planning Council and its predecessor organizations has concerned itself with the needs of all citizens, but particularly for those whose voices are weak. One of these latter groups has often been children, particularly children who are handicapped in one way or another. In 1969, the Council adopted the following policies in respect to handicapped persons,

Services to the Planning for the Handicapped: Building Code Revisions adopted in April 1969:

That the standards of access, and use, of all public, or semi-public buildings, including appropriate numbers of suites in public or low income housing projects be regularly reviewed so as to reflect the special needs of handicapped persons of all sorts.

Education and Integration of Handicapped Persons:

That to the maximum extent possible, handicapped persons be offered the same educational, housing and employment opportunities as all other citizens.

This policy perspective is founded on two beliefs. First, as a matter of natural justice, we believe in the rights of all persons to equity of access to the goods and services of society. This belief is grounded both in our philosophy of human services, and also in the vast literature which confirms that segregating people from the mainstream not only rarely helps them, but almost always imposes upon them further handicaps, born of the segregation process itself.

Secondly, we know that handicaps present costly burdens, emotional, social and financial. These burdens will be paid, whether early or late, by the individual, family and society. It is our belief, confirmed by experience here and in many parts of the world that we should incur the burden earlier rather than later. Most handicapped persons can lead independent, productive and fulfilling lives given appropriate early supports. Education is the key that unlocks their future. To deny it, even where it is costly, dooms the individual to a life of dependency, and the state to a heavy burden of costs throughout his or her life.

We were delighted then in 1975 to see the Provincial Government of that day pass a piece of legislation which came to be known as Bill 58, though its more proper title is section 465 (22) of the Public Schools Act, namely:

"Every school board shall provide or make provision for the education of all resident persons who have the right to attend school and who require special programs for their education".

However, the promise of speedy proclamation of this legislation faded, and 1979 has almost passed, leaving a gap of four years during which time neither the former nor the present government has fully declared its intent with regard to this vital law. The appearance in the last session of the legislature of Bill 22, a wholesale revision to the Public Schools Act again raises questions about the right of access to education on the part of handicapped children. Our brief will confine itself to comments on the issue of special needs children, and their rights to, in our own policy's words, "the same . . . educational opportunities as all other citizens".

Section 2: Education — A Natural Right:

Successive jurisdictions in the western world, be either new legislation, or citizen initiated court

action, have come to the conclusion that all children have the right to attend school, in spite of even relatively severe handicaps. Great Britain, France and the United States all have specific legislation granting or enabling special support for this right. Alberta, through its supreme court has found that handicapped children have a right to enroll in regular school systems. It appears that the trend of law is in the direction of inclusion rather than segregation.

Technology and the advance of knowledge have more than kept up with the law in that we know much more today about how to teach handicapped youngsters, and how to prevent the handicap from having a larger effect than necessary on the child. Indeed, totally blind children, severely hard of hearing children, and children with extensive physical limitations are regularly and effectively included in some of our schools. Classes with special programs for children with mild or moderate forms of retardation or with emotional or learning disabilities are also frequently found today. Nevertheless, it must always be remembered that schools and school divisions make such programs available as an extra resource. Frequently, a large portion of the costs are borne by the local tax base. It is entirely to the division's credit that such programs exist, but it is surely time that the programs offered with foresight by some divisions be available as a matter of right in all divisions.

Section 3: The Public Schools Act — A Vehicle for Children's Rights:

The purpose of an act is surely to establish both the purpose and the content of legislation. It is not enough simply to have a number of clauses. Clauses should find a unifying principle in a statement of policy intent. This clarity of intent is lacking in the current draft of Bill 22, and the resultant unclarity is evident in the clauses regarding handicapped children. For example, section 258 offers definitions regarding school attendance, but does not define "handicap". We are told in section 261(2) that "sickness or unavoidable cause" does not mean handicap. We know a bit of what handicap doesn't mean, but not what it does.

We would suggest that a statement of intent such as the following would adequately serve the purpose of clarification of the intended impact of sections 260, 261, 41(1)(a), 41(4), 41(5), 41(6), etc.

To the maximum extent practicable, handicapped children shall be educated along with children who do not have handicaps and shall attend regular classes. Physical and mental impediments to normal functioning or handicapped children in the regular school environment shall be overcome by the provision of special aids and services rather than by separate schooling for the handicapped. Special classes, separate schooling or other removal of handicapped children from the regular educational environment shall occur only when, and to the extent that, the nature or severity of the handicap is such that education in regular classes, even with the use of supplementary aids and services, cannot be accomplished satisfactorily.

Section 3.1: Comment on Section 41(1)(a):

Section 41(1)(a) requires that school boards provide adequate school accommodations for the resident persons who have the right to attend school, as defined in sections 259. However, section 260 and 261 also define attendance rights, and should be referenced in 41(1)(a).

Section 41(1)(a) appears to intend that accommodation be "adequate" for those attending school, presumably including the physically handicapped, as suggested by sections 260(2) and 261(2). However, nothing is contained in sections 45-47 regarding transportation and the rights of handicapped persons to transportation, which is clearly part of "accommodation" in any reasonable sense of the word. Nor is there any mention of the accommodation of such students in the sections respecting School Buildings (secs. 69-74). Therefore, we can only presume the intent, and likely it will require court action to clarify the matter of accommodation for handicapped children. Surely, if the intent is to include, this can be more clearly and adequately stated in the above sections.

Section 3.2: Comment on Section 41(1), 41(5) and 41(6):

In the above named sections, the Act appears to substantially repeat the words Bill 58. Compare the readings, as set out below:

Bill 58, Section 465(22):

"Every school board shall provide or make provision for the education of all resident persons who have the right to attend school and who require special programs for their education".

Bill 22, Section 41(5):

"Every school board shall, as far as is possible and practicable in the circumstances, provide or make provision for resident persons who have the right to attend school and who require special programs for their education".

The only difference lies in the critical words "insofar as is possible and practicable in the circumstances".

These words offer a broad loophole to those divisions who do not see the inclusion of children with special needs as a priority. Both the American Law (public law 94-122) and Manitoba Law

465-22 (Bill 58) do not offer such a loophole. These latter laws require the division to appropriately educate all children, but have sufficiently flexible implementive regulations to establish a cascade of services approach in which the intention of integration is clear, but its approach in practise consists of a series of states as outlined on the diagram opposite.

Clearly some children may never reach the top of the cascade. However, far fewer should be found at the bottom than is now the case. Again, a clear statement of intent would do much to resolve the ambiguities of Sections 41(4) and 41(5). We believe that with this statement of intent, the words "insofar as is possible and practicable" can be safely deleted.

Section 41(6), coupled with 41(5) is a valuable section, since it intends to include programs offered to children under Section 41 in total. This section should be retained as it now stands.

Comment on Sections 258, 259, 260 and 261. These sections define the rights and duties of school boards and parents to receive and send children to school. Section 258 appears incomplete, in that a number of terms used in subsequent sections are not defined. Among these terms are "handicapped", Section 260(2); "education administrative consultant", Section 261(1)(b).

Section 259 appears to give handicapped children as well as non-handicapped the right to attend school, and Section 260(1) unequivocally imposes a duty on parents to see that their children attend school. However, the effect of these sections is weakened by the inclusion of Section 260(2), referring to andicapped children, especially when 260(2) is read in conjunction with 261(1)(c) and 261(2). We would acknowledge that discretion need to be exercised about the matter of expecting for example the profoundly retarded, physically handicapped youngsters be included in school. In fact, no one has ever suggested or expected that this would be done. Therefore we would recommend that 260(1) be amended to read as follows:

Responsibility to send child to school.

260(1) Every parent of a child of compulsory scuool age and every person who has or receives a child of compulsory school age in his house, whether that child is his own or that of any other person and the child is resident with and in the care and custody of the parent or person, as the case may be, shall ensure that the child attends school in accordance with the provisions of this Act, the regulations and the rules of the school board, unless specifically excused by the Minister in writing, cause that child to attend school in accordance with the provisions of this Act, the regulations and the rules of the school board.

With such an amendment, the duties of schools and parents alike are clear. All children must attend school, unless specifically exempted from doing so by the Minister of Education, in writing. Therefore Section 260(2) can be deleted. Section 261(2) should be amended to read:

"Specifically diagnosed handicaps shall not of themselves, be deemed to be "sickness or unavoidable cause" within the meaning of clause 261(1)(c)."

The reason for such an amendment is simply that some physical handicaps are much more debilitating than some emotional, social, learning or birth induced handicaps. To separate out physical handicaps does not make sense programatically nor are children with such handicaps necessarily easier to teach.

Following this section, or at some other point in the Act such as Sections 41(4) and 41(5) an appeal mechanism must be provided for parents, guardians or educators who feel that the program being provided to a student with special needs is not adequate or appropriate. Various avenues of appeal are possible, but our point is simply that one must be provided.

Sections 247 to 257 give a detailed appeal procedure for other causes and may provide an adequate model for an appeal under 41(5) or 261(2), etc.

Comment on sections 45 to 47 — Transportation:

Severely physically handicapped youngsters often require special transportation in order to have access to education. While a few families are able to make such arrangements, clearly to have to do so imposes an inequitable burden on people who are already carrying a very heavy load in the daily care of a handicapped child.

Therefore, these sections need to be amended to impose a duty upon school boards to provide portal to portal transportation as required for such children. Wherever possible, such transportation should be in the regular school bus, by means of either lifts or ramps, as required by the vehicle. In this way, the maximum integration possible can happen, and regular students can aid in the process of transportation.

Comment on Sections 69 to 74 — School buildings:

The principle of universal access must be stated in the act, since without so doing, school boards may either fail to make adequate provision for access during construction or modification of buildings, or may apply for exemption under the national building code from having to provide such access. Without a clear policy, provincial funding under the Act may not provide for the costs of such access. We would not expect that expensive alterations to existing schools would necessarily be made, but would observe that with local ingenuity, quite amazing improvements in access can

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be made for very small expenditures. School boards need clarity in the Act which allows for claim to be made for such alterations, and a reasonable expectation that they will be supported in such claims.

In summary, the Social Planning Council would commend the government for the clear progress indicated in the current Act, as drafted. Our concerns however are that:

1. No clear statement of intent accompanies the Act.
2. A number of troubling ambiguities are introduced by the sections commented upon above.

We would commend the committee's attention to the "Second Report of the Minister's Advisor Committee on Bill 58" which contains salient points of policy direction upon which the authors of that report, which include teachers, superintendents, trustees and those with expertise in the field of special education were in unanimous agreement.

The Planning Council puts forward this critique in a spirit of cooperation and commitment to the educational needs of all our children.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Sir. The name is Warman, is it?

MR. WARMAN: That's right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Warman.

Any questions of Mr. Warman or Mr. Sale?

Mr. Boyce.

You can just stay there, or you can answer there, that's no problem. Sure, you can use the microphone where you are sitting. Proceed.

MR. BOYCE: Did you happen to see the report on CBC last night relative to Lord Roberts School.

MR. SALE: I am familiar with Lord Roberts School, Mr. Boyce.

MR. BOYCE: I know Mr. Sale would be familiar with it, I was just wondering if you had seen the program last night.

MR. SALE: No, I didn't.

MR. BOYCE: It was a very good program, Mr. Chairman, and perhaps we should consider some point in time adjourning the Committee and go and visit that school, because we could actually see what takes place.

In referring to your brief, on page 4, you say, "We would suggest that a statement of intent, such as the following, would adequately serve the purpose of clarification of the intended impact of these sections." And in your words, "to the maximum extent practicable".

MR. SALE: Right.

MR. BOYCE: That's what you think, that a statement of intent . . . So we have before us a suggested bill to include your statement in law. But then you go on to Page 7 and say we should take this out of the law. We believe that this statement of intent, the words "insofar as is possible and practicable" can safely be deleted.

Then on Page 9 you say and I'm reading from the second paragraph toward the latter part of it: "We would acknowledge that discretion need be exercised about the matter of expecting for example that profoundly retarded, physically handicapped youngsters be included in school."

On Page 10, "Various avenues of appeal are possible, but our point is simply that one must be provided." So even from your own brief you underline the difficulty that is facing governments, that in our society and putting in law something which gets the expectations of all people to the point where it can't realistically be fulfilled. So that, if I may, Mr. Chairman, just ask for the opinion of other representatives of this body. Legal precedent is such that when "shall" stands by itself it is more rather than less imperative. And the suggested wording in dealing with this matter makes it more permissive than imperative. So that when it comes down to the final line, is there any difference in what you are suggesting and what the law is as suggested by the government? Is there any difference? Because you point out page after page the difficulty resolving it and even if you make the "shall" more permissive than imperative, you still say that there should be an appeal mechanism built in. So you further emphasize that it is a difficult problem and decisions will have

be made that "shall" is not imperative in all cases.

MR. SALE: Mr. Chairman, I think that's a really good way of phrasing the difficulty, Mr. Boyce. There's no question that you have to build some flexibility. The difficulty with the present wording is that it doesn't modify anything. As far as practical and possible in the circumstances, it doesn't modify anything. There's no statement that says, "What are the kind of general understandings if 'possible'?" For example, ten years ago it was generally understood that it wasn't possible to have totally blind children in school. In many jurisdictions that's simply routine now. It's taken for granted that a blind child will attend school and there's really no question about that.

So the difficulty is that without a statement of intent that says, our intention is inclusion and the onus is on the educator to show why inclusion simply isn't going to meet the needs of the child, meet the needs of the system, it would meet the needs of the system, to exclude a lot of children. It would be more practical and more possible to exclude children because it would be cheaper for the educational authority to do so. The question is whether practical and possible ought to modify the condition of the child. That's how you should define what's practical and possible; what the child's needs are. Is it practical to have Johnny in school with this level of handicap? Is it possible, not from the school's point of view but from Johnny's need point of view? And the present Act appears to say that it's up to the school division to make its decision in regulation or rules, as it says, as to what is possible and practical in their circumstances. And I can give you living examples of this.

In one school in Winnipeg last year, a regular public elementary school, a child with flipper-like arms — that is, like a thalidomide syndrome — was refused admission on the basis that he couldn't toilet himself, that there was nobody to pull his pants up and down. That same child attends school in Lord Roberts School, another school in the same school division.

So possible and practical — which I really think is what most principals and superintendents think they now do — in one school meant it's too much trouble to try and find a way to pull this kid's pants up and down, and in another school it meant, of course it's possible, we can get another kid to help him, we've got lots of volunteers around, we'll work it out. So possible and practical needs to modify the child's condition and the child's need, not the division's need or the school's need. And that's why a statement of intent that says we intend inclusion and the onus is on you, the school division, to show why that can't happen, is more appropriate than simply the wording that's in there now which appears to let the school division make the decision on the basis of their possibilities and practicabilities. Do I make myself clear, Mr. Boyce, or am I still fuzzy?

MR. BOYCE: You make yourself clear and you make a couple of points in your statement when you say it's cheaper. Is it not, no matter what the law says it comes right down to how much money is made available for this provision of services, and when there is so many millions of dollars allocated for education, is it not up to the legislators, and they put pressure on the Minister, and it's the kind of pressure that Ministers appreciate, because he's in a group of people who are fighting for dollars, so the more public pressure — I'm not talking about the confrontation type of pressure necessarily but nevertheless, the kind of pressure that comes forth in an advocacy type of way is such that the Minister can justify asking his colleagues that more priority be placed on a particular thing. So in a final analysis, that's how operationally this works. Is that not a fact no matter what you put in the law?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Warman.

MR. WARMAN: Yes, may I answer this? I can see the Minister's problem, I really can, but I believe it has been well demonstrated throughout much of the social service field, that if one can tackle a problem in the early years and to an extent rectify that problem to the greatest possible extent during the childhood years, the cost overall is far cheaper.

MR. SALE: Mr. Chairman, if I may just also on that point. . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Sale, proceed. Mr. Sale.

MR. SALE: When I said that it's cheaper, I alluded to one of the problems we have in human services. Human services are fragmented into a number of different departments. It would be cheaper for the education authority to exclude the children and impose the cost on the health authority, which is in fact to some extent what has happened in the past. The question of cheaper and more expensive has to be answered in terms of what level you're speaking from. From the educators authority it would be cheaper to exclude; there's no question about that. However, the same taxpayer

then pays for the child's inclusion in a total care institution for the rest of their lives, more than likely. So if you want to look at the overall cost questions, I don't think there is any question that it's cheaper to intervene earlier. Unfortunately, as you pointed out, the Minister of Education is in competition with his colleague, the Minister of Health, for sufficient dollars to meet his priorities. And that's a weakness of our government system. I don't know how to overcome it; it's a reality. But I think that the wisdom of the Cabinet has to be exercised to say what's the overall cost benefit for the province and I think over all the cost benefit pretty clearly is on the side of early intervention the maximum education possible leading to the maximum independence possible, and that should strengthen the Minister of Education's hands.

The other point about budget, Mr. Chairman, is that handicapped children are not competing on equal grounds with the physical education department, the audio visual department, the science department, because those budget items and processes are well established in the framework of most divisions. In terms of curricula, there is a stated requirement about how much English is to be taught. For example, Language Arts; how many hours of Language Arts is to be in the curriculum. Therefore, the division has to staff to that and plan to that and buy materials to that. There is nothing stated anywhere yet that says what's an appropriate level of educational support for a profoundly hard of hearing child, so the division's budgetary processes set aside this child and they make him compete unfairly, I think, with the phys. ed. department that wants 47 new basketballs and a bunch of golf clubs and some cross country skis. They had that line in their budget last year. The Handicap Program is not in the budget, and so it's important that we make it a duty of the school board that that child be taught, regardless of cost in effect, so that they must then reallocate their priorities accordingly.

The Minister of Education and his department come along then and say, we recognize the extra burden that this imposes and we make some special provision for that in our grant structure. But I don't think you serve the handicapped child very effectively by forcing the division always to have their special programs in effect totally dependent on the local tax base. Now I know that's an over statement in terms of the education of mentally retarded children who are provided for in some grant formulas, but many of the special programs are entirely divisionally unique and most of their costs come from the division. And I also know that you spend \$13 million a year in special education services; I don't deny that. But we're talking now about those children who are not appropriately included yet and they're not included in that \$13 million.

MR. BOYCE: Well, Mr. Chairman, I would agree that the argument is irrefutable, that the money spent in the long term is actually a saving, pound foolish and penny wise in many areas. But when it comes right down to it, before I make the point. We have made progress and I too regret, you know, that it wasn't proclaimed that particular section. But nevertheless, the fact that it was existing in law albeit not proclaimed, great strides have been made in this area and the learning experience at Lord Roberts, Mr. Chairman, you know, is a fantastic experience because the teachers primarily are really the ones . . . and the parents and the whole system operated to have that thing come about, because that's one of the biggest difficulties, the learning experience for how to include this. Last night on television, this young lad was in a wheelchair, and very simply, he was afraid to go because people stared at him. How do you deal with these human relationships? I don't think any government refutes this. We have made inroads into this area and we have to increase it. But nevertheless, in your presentation relative to transportation, it's fine — I saw that youngster on television last night, the one to which you refer, and the Thalidomide Syndrome is quite a problem.

But in transportation, you say they should be transportable to the public school system. Take the case where somebody is in a heart-lung machine, do we have to provide an ambulance to transport that heart-lung machine, and have the support systems in the public school? I really hate arguing this thing, but nevertheless, a couple of years from now we're going to have to live with this law, as the government.

MR. TIM SALE: Mr. Boyce, I refer you to Page 7, jurisdictions from the far left to the far right have approved these sorts of Acts and I suspect that this really ought to be seen as not a matter of who's in government.

Page 7, opposite the diagram, you'll see that the second box from the bottom is Hospital Instruction Both Ministers of Education that I've been involved with in this bill, both understood that this diagram was the policy direction that we ought to go in Manitoba, and it certainly is widely supported in North America. There is no expectation that every last child will reach that top level. The expectation is that for every child and for every program, the direction of progress will be clear; the intention of progress will be clear; and that the flexible provision of services from Level 1 to Level 11 will be such that there won't be big gaps, thereby causing kids to fall farther down

in that pyramid than they would otherwise normally have to do. That's a very important point. If you don't have a flexible enough system, you force kids into an instruction pattern that is below their needs, because you can't force them into one that is above, because they'll fail immediately. But if you're missing steps 3 and 4, for example, which at this point we're not, we've got some of those in some divisions, then the child with the needs of 3 and 4, but no resources will almost inevitably find himself in 5 or 6, failing down through the system, and our child care institutions and our streets have lots of these children who have failed down through the system, because it was not sufficiently flexible to meet the kind of needs that they had at that time.

We don't mean either that there will not be failures. Some of you know, I guess, I'm a clergyman, I don't think we're going to get rid of sin, and I don't think we're going to get rid of failure, and I don't think we're going to get rid of stupidity and all those other things. There will always be children whom the public school system cannot serve no matter how much it tries; we're not expecting a perfect system. It's unrealistic to expect the school to be able to meet all the needs of all the children. But it is realistic to say that it will intend to, and that the onus will be on it, to clearly say why it just could not do so. That's where the appeal mechanism that you question comes in.

When the school system says, I can't do so, there has to be an appeal for either the child, the parent, or some educator, to be able to say, I don't agree, I think there is another way that we haven't tried yet. That's why we need an appeal mechanism in the law, that allows for that question to get raised beyond the school board, because the rural school boards have not made as much progress as some of the urban boards. Some of the rural boards, south-central Manitoba, have done some marvelous things, but many of them, for reasons of resources, a low level of incidence of problems, have not made the progress that Winnipeg 1 has made for example. That's why an appeal mechanism is very important.

MR. BOYCE: To get rid of sin is a situation devoutly to be wished, then you'd be out of a job and maybe enter politics and make a contribution because I think you could make a definite one. I've never asked Mr. Sale his politics and it's none of my business, but nevertheless, I think he could make a . . . maybe he could get in the government at the present time and give them some stability.

Here you reinforce my statement that progress has been made. Is it not the case that it is not the law, it's the moneys that we as citizens are making available in the whole educational field, the percentage of the Gross National Product which is going into education generally is decreasing. Not to get into a private-public argument, but nevertheless this thrust across the country where the private sector is going to solve all the problems, there is a diminution of the attention to the public services which had, by any government, a legitimate reason to exist. So that there has to be a general support of the community, not your politicians, necessarily, but the public generally has to almost force the politicians to allocate more money as a matter of priority into education, and specifically in this area, that more funds have to be made available.

If I may, to underline the point I'm making, in another field, in the health services side of it, one of my constituents phoned me from the hospital — two broken arms — and they had cut back such that they didn't have anybody to help her to go to the bathroom. And you can let that sit in your mind and see what difficulty she was facing in this particular case. And I'm not raising this as a political point at the moment. I'll wait until the Minister of Health's Estimates are up. But nevertheless, the hospital is faced with budgeting, and the schools are faced with budgeting, so that we can put into the law what we want. And I think any government tries to write laws which aren't going to precipitate law suits, because if "shall" stands by itself, there will be applications for Writs of Mandamus by many people. I'm sure there will. Not that governments shouldn't be challenged before the courts.

MR. SALE: I think the failure to have a clear appeal mechanism makes that probably not just likely, it certainly will happen. When we were involved with the — still are involved with the Advisory Committee to the Minister on this bill — we took the view, supported by parents' groups and supported by educators, that process of discussion about what's an appropriate placement needed to be focused on negotiation, compromise, and continual review, rather than on the American model of appeal immediately to the court. We don't have that kind of tradition in Canada, and I hope we don't develop it, because I don't think the American model meets the children's needs very well in many ways. There are some awful examples of what has happened in this kind of legislation in the States, in California in particular, it's been very bad.

If there's a clear route of appeal and negotiation included in the intent and in some section of the Act, this is how you appeal this. I think that will allow people to not immediately run off to court for a writ. You can't prevent them from doing that, but I think the Act ought to encourage

a process of compromise negotiation, trial, review, keeping at it, because with handicapped children, in particular, program placement may need to change every three months, or every two months. Some may even be more than that and some may not, but it is flexibility that's the issue and continual openness to review and appeal and trying to sort the problem out, because the pain and suffering, both of the parents and of the child, in some of these difficult situations is such that that kind of patience is going to have to be built in because you are not going to satisfy. If you don't satisfy and you run up against a blank wall with no other avenues then the aggressive person is going to go to court. If there are some avenues of flexibility then we can stay out of that and I hope we do, I hope we don't go the American route.

MR. BOYCE: In other presentations there were two suggestions: one was an ombudsman-type of appeal mechanism, and the other one, I believe, it was by Mr. Arpin, the end result of which would lead us into the French system, the consiel d'etat, that really you have to have a whole group of experts. He suggested that this group in France has 56 people who are members of this appeal group.

With the indulgence of the committee, this is, I am sure, a difficult decision for the Minister and it is a difficult decision for all of us. So, if we could pursue this just for a few moments longer, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Sales I'm sure will recall the difficulty in coming to grips with the problem in The Child Welfare Act, and some had thought that the Appeal Panel would resolve the problem. And my opposition to the establishment, as it was created, made me about as popular as a skunk at a garden party in many areas because it is based on the premise that it is not in the public interest to pass bad law just to assuage a certain pressure that existed at any point in time. So that if we accepted the recommendations of your group and the other ones who suggested this appeal mechanism, from our experience, know full well it is not going to resolve the problem, it's not going to have more things done faster. In fact, in my opinion, it would do the opposite, it would take the pressure off of the governments because they would put in place an appeal mechanism; but the time itself involved in any appeal mechanism, two months, three months, would be such that it would relieve the existing pressure.

MR. SALE: I don't think any of us at the Council, with the exception, perhaps, of former Chief Justice Rhodes Smith, are experts on appeal mechanisms, and I certainly am not. I think the issue again though is, if the law doesn't say where can I go if finally I'm just not satisfied that the intent of this law is being fulfilled, then I will go to court; if it does say there's another place you can go, then I'll go there before I go to court. Now, the question is: Can you head off a succession of appeals to court? I don't think there are going to be very many. I mean, after all, there are very very few children who are not already in school. The vast majority of children, and I mean 99.something percent are already in school. The question is whether they are being programmed for appropriately, not whether they are in or out of school. In the American situation there were children not in school; there are very very few Canadian children, in Manitoba at least, not in school that are not there by reason of handicap. There are a lot of street children in the core area of Winnipeg who are not in school, but unfortunately the parents of those children are not likely to appeal, they are mainly children who are not being cared for.

The point is, having an appeal is one more way of keeping it out of the court system. In the Minister Advisory Committee Report a number of other things were suggested that ought to be part of regulation, and I don't want to go into that, I just refer you to that report, that also kept the thing flexible, kept it reviewed, kept it open so that everybody involved in the placement of the child felt like they could get a handle on that and didn't feel locked in for a long period of time. And that is also part of the way in which we can keep the confronting down to a low level and keep negotiating, compromising, trying out new ways. That's the spirit of this.

MR. BOYCE: Well, Mr. Chairman, I just want to thank Mr. Sale for sharing his thinking in this area and thank him not only for his brief, but his continued effort on behalf of these people in the City of Winnipeg.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any further questions? Mr. McBryde.

MR. McBRYDE: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, through you to Mr. Sale. In one of your answers you did talk about, and seemed to have some knowledge of the possible grant systems, where the special need students — whereby they could be assisted. There has been a couple of presentations basically that it is possible to develop a grant system based on the need, that is to do assessments and to say that this school needs so much extra dollars for this kind of program, as opposed to using some sort of per capita grant or general grant system. Would you care to respond to that?

IR. SALE: The Minister of Education said Student Support Services — not Student Support services, what's the right name of the Support Services Branch, Mr. Cenerini's Branch? C.D.S., Child Development and Support Services did a survey of special education in Manitoba two summers ago and they came up with a recommendation which I think is the best one that I've seen, at least for the present, and that is to see both of what you are suggesting, Mr. McBryde, and that is that there be a two-tiered approach ; that for the fairly

low cost but fairly frequently occurring handicaps which would include mild retardation and some other forms of handicap you would have a per capita grant system much like the current system. We might argue that it should be one to three hundred, or one to two hundred, or one to four hundred, whatever, you could argue the level of that in terms of the richness of the support, but it is simply a per capita grant. And that seemed to us to be a good approach.

However, what has happened is that with only that per capita grant some of the students who are more handicapped are now, as Mr. Boyce pointed out, getting more service and that is great. But they are displacing some of the less handicapped students into more regular programming which isn't suited to their needs, and the money is being spent on those more handicapped. That's great but it isn't meeting the kids who are getting displaced's needs. So I guess our suggestion and your department's suggestion, the Minister's department suggestion is that you couple that grant per capita with a special grant on the unique situation basis. When I was a trustee in Fort Garry, for example, we had one ch

3ild on wh

3om we had to spend a little under \$6,000 a year to get him into a special program, and we spent that entirely out of the local tax

3 base which was a good thing to do, I don't disagree with that. Many divisions could not afford to do so, we were fortunate we could, and I think that a rural division that had a low tax base probably couldn't.

So, if you could allow for those low incidence but high cost handicaps, a process somewhat like you have now in the department where a child needs a phonic ear, for example, which is a device that allows for FM transmission of speech with

3out having to have a connection between the speaker and the receiver; the teacher wears a microphone transmitter and the student wears a receiver. Well, those are very expensive devices. Now : they are available from the department, on approval, on a special need basis. It seems to me that you could broaden that and have programs available on a special need as demonstrative basis. And so it would be a two-tiered system that makes sense, and that was not our suggestion, that was the Minister of Education's own staff's suggestion and I think it is a good one.

MR. McBRYDE: I think that you have presented a good argument in terms of the long-term costs and that it is better to deal with the problems at an early stage.

The other part of your brief that I would like you to comment a little bit more on is where you say that local ingenuity, amazing improvements in access can be had for very small expenditures. Could you give me some examples of the kind of thing you're talking about. That's always intriguing to us if it doesn't cost more money.

MR. SALE: Some of the lifts that have been designed in some rural areas where maintenance people have designed very effective lifts to get kids up into old buildings that have high steps. You know, we had some idea in the past days that you had to have a lot of steps up to a building; I'm glad we've gone away from that. But in some rural areas they've designed some really super little gadgets to, in effect, lift a wheelchair up and they don't have to be made in some high technology place, they can be made locally, and as long as they're carefully done and safe then that's great. We shouldn't have to go through a great process to get that done, that's one kind of local ingenuity that has been really useful.

A lot of the appliances that kids with physical handicaps use daily, the little adaptions, adaptations that need to be made to desks and things, can often be made by the maintenance man who knows how to do a bit of welding and can drill a hole and change a desk; and those are the kinds of things that we should encourage and not discourage. There's a lot of local ingenuity out there to make use of.

MR. McBRYDE: Yes, I think, and from your other example of the child just needing to be able to have assistance to go to the toilet. Part of it is a matter of attitudes and some flexibility within the system and doesn't have a high dollar cost.

The other question is, do you have any idea in terms of numbers or percentages, like what percent

in the school system would be low incident-high cost cases and what percentage in the school system would be the high incidence-low cost?

MR. SALE: Some of those figures are in that Special Education Review, and in that review it is pretty well detailed that it is very hard to come at those figures. I wouldn't want to offer any suggestions about them, I think those are the best figures the department has and they're probably the best there are in the province.

MR. McBRYDE: That's all thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Hanuschak.

MR. HANUSCHAK: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I note that you state in the introduction of your brief that first there's a matter of natural justice; we believe in the rights of all persons to equity of access to the goods and services of society, and of course, you are referring there to schools, to education.

I would like to direct you to Section 4(1) of the Education Administration Act, that's Bill 23, wherein the Minister of Education wishes to give himself the power to make regulations governing the operation of public schools, amongst others; and designating the groups, kinds, classes, or types of persons to be admitted as pupils therein. That's No. 1. And No. 2, and the fees and charges

3es, if any, to be paid by the pupils. So I am just wondering, Mr. Chairman, whether Mr. Sale or Mr. Warman has any specific response or comment to make with respect to that particular section, in view of your statement urging inclusion, rather than exclusion, and that education ought to be the universal right. And here there is a suggestion of opening the door toward user fees; and having given the Minister the power to designate groups, kinds classes, who will be admitted to the public school system, and it would follow that if such classes are designated that the converse is also true that some will not be admitted. And how does that sit with your association?

MR. SALE: I wish I were a lawyer, Mr. Chairman. I don't think that I would comment on that, I think that simply the normal intention of an administration is to state what the broad powers of the Minister are going to be and I suspect that if the amendments were made, that we suggested, and the statement of intent was passed, that there would be no difficulty with that. I don't believe that that — I'm a layman when it comes to the law — I don't believe though, and my understanding, as a trustee at least, that that would affect the intent of inclusion. I think it simply allows you to set ages of admission, ages beyond which tuition won't be paid for by the tax base but could be charged to the person, for example, as a fee. So I fail to see a connection that is really germane to the point that we are presenting, I'm sorry.

MR. HANUSCHAK: Yes, you would not have any fear or apprehensions about the fact that, by virtue of the presence of this Section in the Act, that a school division seeking additional financial support for the provision of adequate programs for the types of pupils, such as you are interested in in your brief, if they were to say that, "well we haven't the funds", then the Minister could wave this bill in their face and say, "well if you can't raise funds by way of special levy, and I have insufficient funds in the Provincial Treasury, then I am going to impose a user fee. And those requiring a special program or a more expensive program, let them pay for it."

MR. SALE: I don't believe that that is likely to happen in any administration that I can think of right now. Of course, all of those things are possible, and of course, you could amend the law at any time to go back to the dark ages. But I don't think that any of the Ministers that I have known would do such a thing and force already disabled persons to bear a heavier burden than anybody else. I think that's why the statement of intent is important, though, because it clearly unequivocally says, "we intend inclusion and integration." And I would suspect that public pressure would be quite enough to stop any attempt to put user fees on people who are already disabled. I simply don't believe that that's an issue. I'm a layman in that and you may be correct that in law that's a problem, I don't think it is.

MR. HANUSCHAK: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Coseens.

MR. COSENS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to thank Mr. Sale and Mr. Warman for their

I think a very excellent presentation and I, of course, might mention that I am fortunate indeed to have Mr. Sale's expertise on the Advisory Committee on Special Needs that advises my department in that regard.

I might also mention, to Mr. Sale, and I don't know if he would agree or not, that the legislation that the Member for Burrows refers to is almost identical to the legislation that exists in the present Act, and by the way existed while the Member for Burrows was Minister of Education. And I would also suggest, Mr. Sale, and I think you would agree, that any government that was to take action to impose user fees beyond what we consider almost traditional in our system for summer schools and fees of that type, would be taking an action that I'm sure the voters would respond to at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Walding.

MR. WALDING: Mr. Chairman, through you to Mr. Sale. You probably know we've had several briefs presented to us on this basic area that you mention. There is another group of children who are presently not in the schools because of truancy. I've had figures anywhere from 1 percent to 10 percent involved. We haven't heard anybody yet really make much comment or address this problem. I'd like to ask whether the Council has considered this and whether they have any recommendations to us; whether you have any comment on the raising of the fine applicable to parents involved, whether this is going to solve the problem or whether it will solve the problem if you then put the parent in jail if they don't pay the fine and how that is going to get the child to school.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Sale.

MR. SALE: Some members of our board, Mr. Walding, are well known educators and I'm sure they have views on this subject. So I think I can't represent the board in my answer, I think I can only speak on my own behalf.

I don't believe that a punitive process is likely to lead to much learning, so I don't think you're going to get very far with fines. There's the odd parent who may, by exercising more discipline over his child, get the child to go to school if that child is not now going. I don't think there are very many of those.

I suspect that what it's going to wind up doing, is putting more pressure on the Child Welfare Act and on the Child Welfare authorities because the court will find that the parent is not exercising due control over the child and they'll fine the parent or they'll admonish the parent, or whatever, and the parent will continue not exercising that due control because they're not able to in their state and will wind up with more custody cases through the Child Welfare directorate, which I think is a very bad solution.

Most of those street children are there because they failed in school. That's the way the current system works. When the system can't deal with a child it's the child that has failed. The amendments that are proposed to this Act would put the failure on the system rather than on the child. The system would have to indicate why it was unable to provide a learning situation for those native children or for those poor children who are in the core area and find themselves unable to use the current system. Because I simply don't believe that a child of 10 wilfully decides that he wants to lead a life on either public assistance or marginal delinquency and chooses that. He chooses that in only a very narrow sense in that he failed to make any progress or very much progress in the system that he was offered and the experience of that failure leads him to say, "It's better out on the street than it is in this building", so I'm going to be out on the street.

The Act, if amended and pursued, would push divisions, particularly core area school divisions, to develop programs for those children. And yes, they will be more expensive. But the question is, will they be any more expensive than servicing the jails and the child treatment institutions and the unemployment insurance lines that we now service? I can't answer that question, but I sure think it's one that we can presume that the costs will be offset. We may not be able to presume that we'll save money. I think we will, but we may not be able to presume that.

MR. WALDING: Do you think that we have adequate facilities or is it made easy enough for children who don't attend, or for older children who drop out of school early, or are allowed to drop out or encouraged to drop out, who may see the value of an education a few years later, perhaps in their early twenties, for example? Are the facilities now there for them to go back into the school system to make up that lost time? Are we encouraging them enough and are the facilities there?

MR. SALE: There's certainly some encouragement and there are a number of programs at a number of the community colleges, both universities offer special mature student programs. I can't comment on whether there is a lot more need than there is resource at this point. There are a lot of options around.

One of the things that seems to be reported a lot, though, is that it's a patchwork quilt; that there's no co-ordination being exercised between the varying departments that have an interest in re-education or re-entry programs.

The new careers program has a very high success rate and does some very good things with people who have to make big changes in their lives and big changes in their attitude. It's a very small program numerically.

The other difficulty is, that with the level of youth unemployment that we have, it's extremely difficult to ask an employer to employ somebody who is less capable, or less personable, or whatever terms you want to use, than another young person. Youth unemployment is running somewhere in the 14, 16, 18 percent region depending on the time of year; and we certainly don't have 14, 16, or 18 percent of our youth deeply troubled, and a marginal delinquent and learning disabled. So there are quite capable intelligent youth unemployed. When they're competing for the same job as the marginally employable young person, I suspect that not matter how many good courses we offer that marginally employable young person, he's not going to get a job anyway unless it's a semi-sheltered situation or unless the employer is very highly subsidized to willingly take a less functional and capable employee when he could hire off the street a better one. I suspect the problems are more in the employment end than in the re-training end.

I know young people who have been through three or four career paths because at the end of each one they found there's no employment and so they wind up back in another career path. But there's still no employment at the end of that one. The problem is more the employment end than the re-training end.

MR. WALDING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Boyce.

MR. BOYCE: Mr. Sale underlines a very subtle nuance because this, as you have pointed out, is a step in the shifting of onus from the individual to the system. And, Mr. Chairman, in this whole area there is no political brownie points for me in here at all, but that never stopped me before.

I don't think that we would sit here as legislators and come up with an Act which says, "That all doctors will cure people of cancer." That even sounds ludicrous in saying it but nevertheless . . . it's not just the child. The child is paramount, there's no argument. But we have a very good example of politicians solving a problem. They closed all the Indian residence schools and literally "dumped" the children in the system and now they're facing the fact and over the years — I'm not faulting any government but just our system — they're facing the fact that it's not working. Because the evolution of the system to handle the probemm wasn't dealt with, was totally ignored. We passed a law which ignored everything, the child, the teachers, the parents, the community, everything.

Now earlier in response to my colleague, Mr. Hanuschak, you expressed a confidence, a faith, in the Minister to use discretion as far as charging a fee, so why shouldn't, in this area, we demonstrate the same confidence in our governmental system? Admitting that we have made progress. Further progress is needed. We have to continue working with the teachers, and Mr. Chairman, just one simple case.

There was a child placed in one of my classes who could not sit down. A very simple thing. It took two weeks for the kids to. . . It was disruptive for two weeks. It's not a big deal, it worked itself through. But two weeks . . . little learning took place because you only have these kids two or three times a cycle sort of thing, but nevertheless, it's a very mundane example of a very complex problem. I think that our total system and all the components of the system have been working to resolve this problem. And that's why I had said earlier that on this whole difficult area, maybe the committee would be well advised to go and see just exactly what inroads the system has made, our bureaucrats that are much maligned.

MR. SALE: Mr. Chairman, I expressed limited faith in the Minister of Education, whoever he happens to be, by saying that the Act needed to be more clear, and there needed to be a statement of intent, which made the direction very clear, so I have limited faith in that sense. I don't think that any Minister would use discretionary powers unwisely for very long without being called to account. So on that point my faith is in the Minister, but also in clarity in the Act, which I don't think there

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enough of yet.

The point about doctors curing cancer, we have erected a system in which any ill person has a right to attend a hospital, and to be seen and to receive medical care. That system may not work perfectly, any more than the school system does, but the right of access is there. The right of access is not currently there in the school system. So your own analogy, I think, is proof of the issue. The right of access in health care is there. The right of access in education, currently, not. So that would be a second point.

A third point in response to your comments is that of course, you have to go on getting people to change attitude and getting people to accept difference. And the learning that went on in your classroom during those two weeks was of a different kind. The learning was that all people aren't the same, that some people have difficulties. I don't know whether the child couldn't sit down because he was hyperactive or because he had a physical problem, but there was some very real learning going on there, and in terms of a life cycle, it was very important learning, to find out that everybody's not the same, and that some people have unique differences, but that they can still function pretty effectively as individual human beings. And that kind of learning, I think is really important because our society is increasingly full of differences, racial differences, physical differences, the kind of differences that handicaps are all about, and children can learn at an early age, by the inclusion of everybody, that we can work with difference and that we don't need to be afraid of it.

So the process at Lord Roberts is a sign to the schools that this year received eight of Lord Roberts' pupils. Those schools would not take those pupils from Ellen Douglas a year ago. Ellen Douglas tried to refer them out to their home schools. The home schools would not take them. Lord Roberts took them, demonstrated that they could function, got the home schools to come and look at them in a regular school setting, and the home school said, well, maybe if we do this we'd do this and change this and think about it a bit, we could take them. So, of course that process goes on.

What you're facing though, is bringing the Act up to date to where the capability of the system is. And I think the capability is there now to make this Act a reality.

IR. BOYCE: Touche on your point that education did take place. I would agree with you, and my analogy, as any analogy, may be fallacious on a specific point. But that learning did take place underscores another point. It is an indicated policy of the government that they're going to go back to some form of testing, so they're going to define education once again to exclude the kind of education that you said took place, because it puts the teaching profession in a position where professionally they have to dump so much information into an individual that it can be tested at a point in time and compared to other teachers in the province. So you just reinforced my argument. This is a complex problem, and there's no real simple solution to the problem itself.

IR. CHAIRMAN: Any further questions? Mr. Hanuschak.

IR. HANUSCHAK: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to ask Mr. Sale whether he's aware that the significant difference between the two sections that the Minister says are almost identical, the significant difference is that for 100 years in a similar section, the Education Department Act, the Minister never had, never sought the power to impose a user fee in the public schools system, and now he does.

IR. SALE: I'm not aware of that difference, Mr. Chairman.

IR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Sale and Mr. Warman, we thank you very kindly, and the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg for your presentation.

IR. SALE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and members.

IR. CHAIRMAN: I understand that Mrs. Helen Jenner of the Manitoba Association for Children with Learning Disabilities wants to be heard this morning. Is Mrs. Jenner present?

MRS. JENNER: I'm here but we have another presenter. Could I have your name, Madam?

MRS. JOHNSON: My name is Cornelia Johnson. I am the Chairman of the Social Concerns Committee of the Manitoba Association of Children with Learning Disabilities, and rather than go through that again, I'll use the term MACLD. I have brought with me, Heather Grant, who is an Educational Psychologist with the Children's Centre and is a member of the Child Psychiatric Assessment Unit there. Now, Heather can answer questions which I cannot answer because she

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is a professional in the field.

I'd also, at this time, like to explain that MACLD is a parents' organization, which has been advocating educational opportunities for youngsters, and in so doing has established with the Lions the Lions MACLD Learning Centre. These are two separate sorts of entities, and Heather can speak about the experiences with the centre and I can speak in terms of the parents' group.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee. The government should be commended for introducing legislation on behalf of all handicapped children. Section 260(1), advocating the replacement of previous legislation, which limited required education services to the specific handicaps of blindness and mental retardation. However, the proposed legislation falls far short of providing the safeguards needed by those very special children if they are to be assured of an education appropriate to their individual needs.

The Manitoba Association for Children with Learning Disabilities, an organization founded by parents of learning disabled children, has fought a determined battle for more than 12 years for adequate screening and remediation for learning disabled children. We are appreciative of our many allies in the education profession, but we have been keenly aware of the reluctance on the part of many people in this profession to acknowledge the needs of our children. We ask you to protect our children and all handicapped children by rewriting Bill 22 to include our concerns.

The phrase "as far as possible and practicable in the circumstances" in Section 41(5) of the Bill limits the effectiveness of the legislation by giving the school district the discretion to determine when the education of a specific child is "possible" or "practicable". Twelve years of experience has taught us that even affluent school districts in suburban Winnipeg hesitate to provide appropriate programs for Learning Disabled children. Certainly other districts in other areas are equally inclined toward strategies of evasion when expensive education for special children becomes necessary. We ask you to change Section 41(4) to read as follows:

Every school board shall provide or make provision for appropriate education for resident persons who have a right to attend school according to their needs.

Section 260(2) provides for the compulsory attendance of the handicapped child and obligates child and parents to abide by the provisions of the Act, but it does not specify whether schools are obligated to educate children in ways appropriate to their individual needs. In the aforementioned section, we suggest that each school division or district be responsible for arranging a program for each handicapped child which would be consistent with the educational, social, and physical needs of the child. Such placement should be subject to arbitration in the event that the parents of the child and the school board are unable to agree on the child's placement. Such an appeal committee should include members from the Manitoba Teachers Society, the Manitoba Association of School Trustees, and the Department of Education and should be augmented by lay representation. Learning Disabled children, who are of normal intelligence and whose handicap is an inability to process language, either written or spoken or both, have no phonic ears, no crutches, no wheelchairs, no canes. They are physically indistinguishable from their normal peers except for their inability to perform in the classroom. These youngsters are often educated in classes for mentally retarded or ostracised from the classroom and left to stand outside the classroom door. The self concept of the Learning Disabled child is badly battered by destructive school placement. We are most adamant in asking that the following sections be added to Bill 22.

41(5) Every school board shall make appropriate provisions for resident persons who have the right to attend school and who require special programs or program aids for their education.

260(1)(a) All school divisions shall provide appropriate educational programs and program aids for all handicapped persons who have a right to attend school. This shall include special alterations, supplementations, and supports according to the student's individual needs.

Furthermore, when programs are not available within the school district, the district should be obligated to make provisions for the education of the child outside of the school division unless it can be proved that the child is utterly incapable of benefitting from the learning experiences of such a program. The division or district should state behavioral or academic goals for such placement and monitor the placement. We recommend the following additions to Section 260:

(1)(b) Where school divisions find (1)(a) not economically practical that school division shall pay the costs of transportation and education of students at the nearest possible school division which does provide such services.

(1)(c) Where school divisions cannot find an appropriate educational setting for a handicapped student, the division will, with the provincial Department of Education, pay the cost of transportation, education, room and board of students in private schools even if those schools are out of province.

(1)(d) Where a handicapped student is placed in residence in an appropriate school, the Department of Education and the school division shall pay the costs of transportation for winter and spring break as well as transportation for summer vacation.

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Underlying the effectiveness of any of these educational provisions is the need for early screening. Countries such as Finland, France, and Great Britain have demonstrated the efficacy of screening as early as prenatal and infant stages. In Manitoba, the first point of screening should be at least at entry into school. Such screening has long term cost benefits so that children with less visible handicaps can receive remediation at the earliest stage — before school becomes a defeating experience. We recommend that requirements for screening be included in the new Public Schools Act.

Manitoba is far behind in fulfilling its responsibility to its Learning Disabled children. The waiting list at our MACLD-Lions Learning Centre is a long one, and we know that many children from many districts do not even have the opportunity to be placed on the waiting list because either they go unrecognized as Learning Disabled or the child's school district will not refer him or her. We would rather that all Learning Disabled children receive assessment and remediation in their own school district. An improved Bill 22 would be a constructive step in remedying this situation.

Thank you for your consideration.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mrs. Johnson. May I remind the Committee that I have a memo here from Helen Jenner saying that they have tabled one copy of the Educational Rights of Children in Manitoba with the clerk. There is only one copy, but if any of the members want to make reference to it, the clerk has a copy.

Questions for Mrs. Johnson? Mr. McBryde.

MR. McBRYDE: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairperson. I wonder if you could describe for me how you see the present situation and give us some indication of the types of situation or the numbers of children whose needs are not being met in the type of special needs problems that you are talking about in your brief.

MRS. JOHNSON: Historically speaking, the learning disabled child was treated as perhaps emotionally disturbed or within the context of mental retardation, because up until perhaps twelve years ago, it was not recognized that this very special child did exist, that he had normal intelligence and normal capacity with special sorts of teaching. Since then we have had the resource teaching program added to the school system which meant that some of these youngsters who would otherwise have been ignored, were giving some sorts of help and support. However, there are a number of the youngsters, perhaps two percent, which are in need of very extensive sorts of remediation. It's impossible to ask the resource teacher in twenty minutes twice a week to give them that kind of help. The screening is a very serious condition because the teachers are — except in Winnipeg 1 — I don't believe there are any screening devices to pick these children up at a very early age so that they can get the kind of remediation they need.

The parents who become aware of learning disabilities through maybe a poster or a TV program or perhaps our conference once a year, may occasionally decide to take the route of going through private screening for their child; perhaps meeting with Heather at the Childrens Hospital or making a private application to come to the MACLD Lions' Centre, and thereby getting the sorts of screening and the sorts of remediation recommendations that are needed. I have a feeling that probably, and Heather can tell you more about this, that in the rural areas the sorts of expertise in recognizing these kids and in getting the remediation to them is pretty minimal. Would you like to speak to that, Heather?

Ms HEATHER GRANT: In my experience with the children that we have seen at the hospital, there's a great deal of variation between what rural school divisions are offering these children. That's, I think, a real concern with the phrase "as far as possible and practicable". Some school divisions are aware of learning disabilities; they are very conscientiously providing services for these children, and they will in all likelihood continue to do so. Other school divisions will be able to use that phrase to continue to evade to provide these children with appropriate services. There are some school divisions in rural Manitoba who in fact refuse to acknowledge the concept of a learning disability. They say that learning disabilities do not exist. We see a number of these children on our psychiatric unit who, because their problems haven't been identified and they haven't received help, they have gone on to develop emotional problems and social problems, which are now costing a lot of money in terms of treatment.

The rural areas are covered by the Child Development and Support Services. In my experience, the children who are referred for treatment are in the most severe cases, because the resources are limited. The type of testing that is done is mainly of a psychological nature and not specifically to detect children with learning disabilities.

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MR. McBRYDE: Yes, that's a fairly general picture. I would like some idea, some clue, as to the sort of needs not being met, like, what is your guess of the people out there and what is the need — like you, I think identified the first step as the screening process — what needs to be done to make the screening process adequate?

MRS. JOHNSON: I'm afraid that's not a question I have much expertise in. I can say that there is an estimate of perhaps seven to ten percent of the youngsters in Manitoba may have some learning disability; that would be 23,000 students. Now some of them can have sort of very minimal remediation and be able to pick up and go from there. Then we figure maybe one to two percent are severely handicapped, which would be 2,300, which would need this very intense, maybe one to one sort of remediation. And at the present time, I can't give you the sorts of information about what kinds of screening is important and what is being carried on.

MR. McBRYDE: The screening that you do, and I think you offer special programs as well, and there's long lists for those . . . those fee for service programs that you're offering now, do you charge?

MRS. JOHNSON: At the present time, a youngster who is coming in from Winnipeg No. 1 his family would not have to pay for those services because Winnipeg 1 is sharing the cost of that service. Now a youngster that is coming in from another part of the province would have to pay. I believe the fee was \$500; is that correct?

Ms GRANT: It's now \$700.00.

MRS. JOHNSON: Oh, it's now \$700; I haven't caught up with the fee.

MR. McBRYDE: What I'm getting at is that the need is so great that people are willing to pay that kind of money and you still have a long waiting list even though it's going to cost them \$700.00?

MRS. JOHNSON: Correct. Right. For the Winnipeg youngsters, there is not as long a waiting list as for the rural areas.

Ms GRANT: I think we should distinguish between screening and the referrals to the Lions' Learning Centre. In many cases, the Lions' Learning Centre requires that a child be tested before they are considered for admission. Other than the Child Guidance Clinic, there isn't really anywhere in Winnipeg where a parent can go to have their child tested unless they are willing to pay the cost of the testing for it to be done on a private basis.

MR. McBRYDE: I suppose I'd make the assumption then that there is a large number of children with the needs that are not identified yet, there is a large number of children that have the problems but their parents, those that are outside of Winnipeg No. 1, aren't able to afford to get supplemental testing or services for their children.

MRS. JOHNSON: Correct, and also parents who are perhaps not aware of learning disabilities, perhaps school districts in which the teachers have not been trained in identifying a learning disability and therefore these are the unidentified ones that are not getting any sorts of help at the present time.

MR. McBRYDE: The type of children you're describing here, and it's sort of one area of the special needs of students, and the type of children you're talking about here, are these for the most part, very serious problems that require extensive work and expensive work with these students, or do you have a lot of them that, with a little bit of work, a lot could be done because the learning disability is such that it can be corrected?

MRS. JOHNSON: We figure that only about 2 percent are going to need this very, very intensive work. That means seven, eight percent, will have much less input. Maybe resource work for a few years, and can remain in the regular classroom, but will need that kind of help if they're not going to just turn off mentally off of school and then become a school problem. Many of our youngsters, of course are hyperactive. Not all of them are hyperactive, but many of them are. And that makes them a tremendous classroom problem, and these are the ones that are most liable to end up outside the school door, out of the classroom door because they are classroom miseries.

MR. McBRYDE: How do you read the whole educational system now in terms of its willingness and ability to meet these special needs?

MRS. JOHNSON: Just like Mr. Sale does. That there are pockets of fantastic, marvelous people in the school system that will help you out, and then there is a tremendous amount of apathy, of unwillingness to recognize that there is such a thing as learning disability, it's only ten years old, twelve years old, and it's a bit too new for some people, and there is a tremendous amount of variation. However, certainly the last few years have been good years, particularly since the MACLD Lions Centre has opened up, which says there are learning disabled kids, there are ways of getting assessment, there are ways of getting remediation, and this has been a sort of wedge to say to the community, these are the kind of kids that need your help.

MR. McBRYDE: I want to thank you for the presentation and the answers you've given, and also comment that the work of the organization has been very good. Thank you.

MR. WALDING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mrs. Johnson, can you generalize as to how your members found out in the first place that their children had learning disabilities?

MRS. JOHNSON: There are two kinds of members. There is what I call the pre-learning centre member, and then the post-learning centre. Prior to the time that the learning centre was established, parents were aware that "something is wrong with my child", and the ones who had sufficient affluence or awareness, took their children to the States to have them assessed, brought the children back with some sort of remediation programs which met with varying degrees of enthusiasm from their particular school districts. Some of them used private schools in trying to help their kids.

These were the group of parents which arranged and advocated and built the learning centre, so that local children did not need to go to the United States to get some sort of an assessment. Since then, there is now a local facility for assessing these kids, and in the case of the Winnipeg 1 youngsters, of course they are screened in kindergarten, and they 3 have access to the centre that youngsters outside of the city would not have.

MR. WALDING: Can you explain to me what this screening process consists of?

MS GRANT: I want to differentiate between. We were talking about general screening in one part of the proposal and what we're talking about now, I think is the admission of children to a learning centre.

MR. WALDING: I'm most concerned about the initial screening in finding out that some children have this learning disability. How is that initial screening done.

MS GRANT: There's only the Winnipeg 1 School Division, to my knowledge, that is routinely screening kindergarten children prior to their entry into Grade One. They have a group test which is given to measure various areas that are considered essential readiness skills for kindergarten. There are several very good screening instruments available that can be used, I think some of the better ones screen children on an individual basis. The screening that is being done now is done on a group basis and is very sort of a gross measure in terms of . . . it's not a long test to administer and it doesn't provide as much information as could be provided by other tests that are available. I think the purpose of having the screening really is because these children have an invisible handicap; unless the child has very marked co-ordination problems, for example, he's not going to stand out until he gets into school. These children have a very minor neurological impairment, so, like we all do, some of us can't tell directions, for example, where this child also has the mild neurological problem, but it's detrimental to him in the sense that it's affecting his ability to process information visually or auditorily so he's going to have problems with reading and spelling.

So those children can be picked up early, the supports can be built in so that the problem can be remedied, or at least assisted as early as possible. In my experience of some kids that I have worked with on a longer term basis in tutoring, children who are picked up early and are given the required services, can overcome their problem, go on to function in a regular classroom without supports. Some of the children that we see on the psychiatric unit whose problem has gone unrecognized or who have not received treatment, at this point it requires ten times as much effort on the part of both the child and the person who is working with the child, first of all to get through the emotional problems that the child has developed, the frustration, the poor self-concept, unwillingness to try, takes a lot of effort on both parts to get through that part of it before any

effective learning can even take place. So if you catch the children early, you are eliminating a lot of frustration and you're eliminating the cost of psychological services for these children and expensive remedial help.

MR. WALDING: Does this initial screening have to be done by experts? Can it be applied by a teacher to a classroom? That's what I'm trying to understand.

MS GRANT: There are various screening instruments available, some of them that have been developed in the States were designed to be administered by groups of parents on a volunteer basis. Some of the subsections would be administered by the teacher or by the resource person, but on the whole, most of the screening could be done on a volunteer basis by people who are given some preliminary training, not any extensive training is required for some of the screening tests.

MR. WALDING: The next question then: Are the facilities presently available in the province to do what we want to do?

MS GRANT: The screening tests are there. What is not available is the funding, to fund people to do the screening, as I said, some of it could be done on a volunteer basis. I think what's really lacking is the legislation to say that children have to be screened, otherwise school divisions aren't going to go to the time and trouble to do it.

MR. WALDING: I assume that there are differing degrees of learning disabilities, mild cases and severe cases. Will this screening pick out the different levels of learning disabilities, or only indicate that there is either a learning disability or a severe learning disability?

MS GRANT: It should indicate the type of disability that is present, and the degree. In a very young child, it's difficult to say exactly how much of it is maturational and how much of it is learning, is due to a learning problem. But very often, as long as it's acknowledged that there is a problem there, the teacher can work on those areas before they actually become a real deficit.

MR. WALDING: These learning disabilities of which you speak, are they something that a child is born with, or can they develop at a later stage in its life?

MS GRANT: In most cases, I think no one really knows the cause of learning disabilities. In some cases it is due to difficulties experienced prior to or at birth; they can also occur later on due to injury, head injuries as a result of an accident, or illnesses that are associated with a very high fever, for example.

MR. WALDING: What are the responsibilities of teachers in this regard, in spotting learning disabilities, or potential children who should be further tested?

MS GNT: There are screening list of symptoms available for teachers, the types of symptoms they should look for. I think one of the problems is that the teacher education program is presently geared towards educating the average child. There are some courses on learning disabilities, but they aren't required courses, so a teacher can, in effect, complete her entire training program without receiving any knowledge in learning disabilities. And considering that there are a minimum of say, two children in each classroom per year, even those two children per year makes that knowledge worthwhile. The teachers in the primary grades in particular are the ones where that kind of training is the most necessary because, of course if you reach the children earlier, the prognosis is much better.

MR. WALDING: I'd like to ask Mrs. Johnson now if he feels that the main problem for the future is one of dollars, or is it a matter of attitude and awareness on the part of school boards and schools themselves.

MRS. JOHNSON: It's a combination. We need the dollars in terms of the resource teachers, the resource rooms, but we need a great deal of expertise in terms of training teachers to recognize this condition and to help the youngster. Some of our early youngsters, the remediation was strictly the strap because they were a difficult kid in the classroom, and I'm sure you can see what the ramifications of that are in terms of the high school kid that's a dropout and the sorts of programs that they need at that age, if it isn't remediated early.

MR. WALDING: Has there been any testing of high school dropouts to see whether this was the root of the problem?

MRS. JOHNSON: There has been testing of juvenile delinquents to try and assess what might be the factors in terms of learning disability and juvenile delinquency, and there have been some people, particularly a man by the name of Chester Paramba (?) who has come up with the figure of 80 percent of juvenile delinquents have a learning problem.

MR. WALDING: That's an amazing figure. Are those Canadian figures, or . . . ?

MRS. JOHNSON: That's, I believe, Denver, Colorado. I don't believe there has been a comparable, sort of, bit of research undertaken in the Canadian setting.

MR. WALDING: No study done in Manitoba.

MRS. JOHNSON: Not that I know of.

MR. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, first of all, I would like to express through you to Mrs. Johnson to the board, you are marvelous neighbours. I live at 802 Preston — for the past year . . . and I would like to advise you that if it doesn't snow before — not this week-end but the next one, I'll prune the lilac bush.

When you use the figure of 23 percent of the people have learning difficulties, I would suggest it's even harder (higher?) than that because 49 percent of the voters voted Conservative in the last election. Doubtless you heard my question of the Social Planning Council on the imperativeness of "shall", unless your brief goes to that point. Perhaps through you, Mr. Chairman, we could pursue another avenue. I'd like to share with you that I'm glad they were pointing that camera at Mr. Walding because every time a camera comes at me, after ten years my mouth goes like I'm sucking a pickle.

I think, Mr. Chairman, that the organizations that are involved, and this one in particular, has to be commended for the inroads that you have been successful in having put in place. Following through on what Mr. Walding said, I don't think the general public is aware that 100 percent of the people have learning difficulties, it's a matter of degree. And, just to follow my question and give a specific case in my own personal experience, in Grade 12 mathematics I did not understand the law of cosine You know, what's the matter with my semantic reasoning, what's everybody, all the rest of the things, the jargon that we can get into, I don't know.

I got through Grade 12 mathematics by playing the odds. I took the old departmental examinations and I figured that it was the opportunity, or the time was right, for them to put on the exam, develop the law of cosine. So I got in and I took a look at the paper, sure enough it was there, and I just poured it back on. I didn't understand a thing about the law of cosine and didn't understand it until I was 35 years old, and it just so happened that I was in discussion with a mathematics teacher and he came at it from a different angle and thump it just hit home. I don't think the general public realizes that, in this day and age, what capacity we have if we would put the tools in the hands of the teachers that do one hell of a lot of a better job, excuse my expression but that's how I strongly I feel about it.

When we're talking about people with handicaps all of us have handicaps, so that how can we get this across to the public. You know, look at this room, education — and you know, we, the government agreed that this is a very serious matter, the revisions, the re-writing of the Public Schools Act, which is the instrument that we use for the whole system; but the public is just so confused this morning they announced that the American interest rates are going up, you know, the whole . . . , the public is not hearing what we're talking about, and I'm not faulting the media, because the public is not hearing. So, until we can get across to the public, regardless of who the government is, how can we do this?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ms Johnson.

MS JOHNSON: I can only say what we are doing, which is, of course, having a conference every year to explain, bringing in the best, the most exciting speakers we can find to talk about learning disability and the school system; and in having our own programs three to four times a year in which we bring excellent speakers to discuss learning disability.

And, of course, we're a group of very angry, very bitter parents because we've had some kiddies that have had really brutal treatment because their disability was not recognized. And, I can assure

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you, that at least one public will be alive and very much interested in what you are saying.

MR. BOYCE: Well, Mr. Chairman, I think the public shares your concern in that every one of us, including myself, has had somebody who has been impinged upon by the system. My own nephew in 1952 polio epidemic was ground by the system. But this committee is faced with 58 groups, 60 groups, 62 I think, Mr. Chairman, which shows that the organizations and the spokesmen, who are very capable competent people, are realizing the importance of this, but the general public does not. I think that we, as the public, are rather naive in the assumptions that we make, that we put our youngsters in school and your children have problems, my children haven't got problems. And they are inclined to sit back and say, well the lazy teachers all they want is more money. You know, when you said that there are a group of dedicated teachers who expend themselves and become more involved — and I don't want to put words but you kind of questions some of the others. Well, put me in the class of one of the others for just a moment, hopefully I'm not, but nevertheless if I was, I have the responsibility of being involved with 30 children, give or take a few, and I am faced with the task of aiming what I am teaching, not at the top, not at the bottom but in the middle, sort of. And the teacher does the best job, whether it's myself or someone else.

And, if I may, Mr. Chairman, just pursue this a little further, that most teachers, in the degree of professional development that they have available, are all exposed in some of the rudimentary diagnostic testing. I'll give you one example; in teaching the concept of a over b is equal to c over d, yes, and that's quite important, ratios in mathematics. If, for some reason, a youngster doesn't internalize this — like myself when I didn't internalize the law of cosines, or any other thing that takes place in that. A teacher can sit down and draw out a matrix, in other words, put every little Sam and Sue and Mary's name down here and develop 12 questions, with varying degree of difficulty, and find out how much of it sank in. I did this myself and it wasn't the kids that hadn't learned, I hadn't taught it. But, for a teacher to do that, do you know how much time it took me to develop that test for that instance? There are tests that can be used.

It became obvious to me I couldn't do this on every concept that I was expected to internalize with those children during that time that was available in that school year because, not only that, but I didn't know what to do with it if I did find out. Because, you know, we have made some inroads through the professional people that you've made available, and through the Child Guidance Clinic in another, but nevertheless, we are not getting anywhere near the potential because if I, as a teacher, or any other teacher, could have one of these little tests that test the concepts and how well the children have received it, then they have to have the resources to refer these people, whether it's inability to read.

Now, when you said earlier that the American studies, that 80 percent of those people involved in delinquency have learning disabilities, there are some Canadian studies — I'm sorry I haven't got the record of them here — well one of the assessments we that we did here in Manitoba was that if there is anything in common in people that are in the institutions it is that they can't read. Now, I'm not diagnosing why or anything else, but in deploying Helen Green to the Youth Centre she was, as a reading clinician, making some inroads into this. But, nevertheless, it's not the law itself that does this, it's the willingness of the government to deploy the resources which they can deploy.

So the pressure cannot be on politicians to pass laws.

I know, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the indulgence of the committee in this regard because an instrument is designed for something. It's like asking me to build a wristwatch with a sledgehammer. The people, who have appeared so far before the committee with reference to this particular area, I think, are labouring under a misconception that in changing the "shall" to be more imperative, rather than permissive, that it is going to resolve the problem. And, it may be, that the organizations have accomplished their goal in having us do that; but, I would suggest that it is not going to solve the job, or it is not going to solve the problem. So, we're faced with a task of making a recommendation to the Legislature relative to the Public Schools Act; but that in itself won't solve the problem, but how do we get across to the public that they have to realize, the public, the taxpayers, have to be willing to allocate a greater percentage of the gross national product to education, generally, and in this area specifically.

MS JOHNSON: That's a big question. First of all, I'll opt for the "shall", and obviously you have the "shall" and you have the implementation which the Minister's Committee has been working on. Certainly in our field we have found that parents have a tremendous feeling that the professional teacher can be trusted and can be depended upon far more than is really actually the case. When you begin to study the situation you find out that these teachers do, particularly in the area of learning disabilities, have deficits, and that the public has really put a tremendous amount of faith in the teacher that is not warranted in many instances.

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I can't answer your question of how you are going to get to the public at all, other than how we have proceeded, and we're a very special group of parents because of our own unhappiness with our own children.

MR. BOYCE: Well, Well, I guess we could share our frustration in this area, but I would just restate my understanding after 10 years of experience as a legislator and the natural tendency of politicians to address themselves to a particular problem and do what they can and go on to the next one. And why I'm taking this opportunity to try and focus on this area is that if we just let it slide through with a very simple process of striking out a couple of words relative to "shall", it will relieve the political pressure on all of us, but nevertheless, it won't solve the Minister's problem when he's sitting, as I mentioned earlier with Mr. Sale, it's not going to solve his problem when he's scrapping with his colleagues whether you're going to spend \$10 million more on education or build \$10 million worth of more roads. I said it to the Minister on a number of occasions and I know he believes me, but there are some areas that are just too damn important for politics and this is one of them. That it's the public themselves that have to get off their seats.

MS JOHNSON: This is why I feel it's important for lay representation on any sort of committee that might be reviewing placements, because it is not being made strictly by the educators, by the establishment. For a period of time I sat on the Minister's Committee in implementing Bill 58, long lamented, and I was aware that within this committee there were the professionals and then there were these funny people called "mums" down here; and when a professional spoke up everybody swivelled around and heard what they had to say and I felt intimidated so for six months I didn't say a thing and finally I said, you know, a few words and they smiled, sort of benignly looked at me and let me have my say and then they whipped around and listened to what a professional had to say. And, maybe we need a few more "mums" in there snarling.

MR. BOYCE: Well, maybe we'll have an opportunity to pursue this. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any further questions? Mr. Cosens.

MR. COSENS: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to thank Mrs. Johnson and Miss Grant for their presentation. I have had some indirect association with their organization over the years, a personal interest, and I know that they have done a lot of very excellent work and have attempted to achieve some of this awareness in the public that the Member for Winnipeg Centre has been referring to. And I also know that they have been a great comfort to parents sometimes isolated or in remote areas of the province who needed the type of support that their organization provides.

I would like to ask you Mrs. Johnson one particular question. Your reaction to the increased service that is being provided in rural Manitoba by the Child Development Support Services that we have now in place in all regions of the province, where we have child psychologists available to the school divisions who can, and who do, go to the schools, confer with teachers, and who do, in fact, screen children at an early age when they are identified, in most cases by the teacher and provide suggested remedial programs, either to the classroom teacher or to the resource teacher, could you comment as to the effect that you see of this particular service as it's now being offered in rural Manitoba?

MRS. JOHNSON: First of all, I'd have to say that our organization has branches in Brandon, Lac du Bonnet, Thompson, and Killarney, so we are not a group that is really financially based in rural Manitoba. These services, of course, were welcomed with open arms. There has been considerable concern that perhaps the child psychologists who are in the rural areas are having to carry an extremely heavy load compared to, say, the child psychologists in the Child Guidance Clinic here in Winnipeg, because they do have that extra mileage involved. And a number of our youngsters are identified before school because of speech problems. These are kids that cannot handle the problems of . . . well, maybe they're three or four years old and they're not talking, and then it is a matter of speech therapy for them, and so a number of youngsters are seen by speech therapists. So I can only say rather generally that the resources in the rural areas were welcomed as a good start with some question as to how heavy their input is.

MR. COSENS: That's all, Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. Thank you, Mrs. Johnson.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any furthrr questions for Mrs. Johnson? Mr. Hanuschak.

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MR. HANUSCHAK: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to add one question and this again relates to a section of Bill 23 which the Minister had indicated earlier as practically identical to the previous legislation except for one change: the specific reference to public schools and the fees and charges that may be levied therein as opposed to the previous section which just made reference to schools in general including, I would suspect, correspondence technical schools and the like. But now there is a specific reference to public schools and I would ask for your views or concerns if any that you may have about the Minister opening the door to the levying of a deterrent fee on programs within the public school system. Just to refresh your memory, the section will allow the Minister to make regulations governing the operation of public, amongst other types of schools, and designating the groups, kinds, classes or types of person to be admitted as pupils therein and the fees and charges, if any, to be paid by the pupils. Is this of any concern to your organization?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mrs. Johnson.

MRS. JOHNSON: The committee itself did not address itself to that particular issue. We were more concerned with the issue of the handicapped child in the school and of course, a number of our families have been pretty much into some very heavy financial problems because of their youngster, because they have had to send the youngster to, well, in some instances, to Ontario, in another instance to Boston, in order for the child, an older child, this is 17 or 18 year old, to get the kinds of help that they needed and therefore we have been very much involved with asking for financial backing for those youngsters that are going to have to be sent out of the province for remedial help, and it would be my assumption that such fees would be antithetical to that sort of a stand.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Hanuschak, any further questions? Mr. McBryde.

MR. McBRYDE: Yes, I would like to ask Mrs. Johnson why did the organization decide to set up its own facilities?

MRS. JOHNSON: Because youngsters were in the schools, they were Learning Disabled, and when the parents took the youngster to the principal, to the Child Guidance Clinic, the sorts of remediation that were given were within a mental health framework, "let's talk this over, let's see what's going on in the family". The child needed very special, perhaps very special help in reading, and the parents were being asked, "Well, Mrs. Jones and Mr. Jones, let me ask about your sex life", that sort of thing, things being treated within the mental health framework. Then also, youngsters were being put into classes into the mentally retarded, and when after considerable heartbreak on the part of parents, they were unable to get the kinds of remediation that they felt that they needed; they weren't getting the sorts of screening they needed, they said, well, let's establish a school or an assessment centre of our own so that the youngsters in Winnipeg do not have to go to Denver to get the sorts of assessment and sorts of programs worked out for them.

MR. McBRYDE: Do you see the day when the system itself will be able to provide these kinds of services as part of the education system?

MRS. JOHNSON: We certainly hope so.

MR. McBRYDE: In the area of screening, I'm still under the assumption that most of the problems are discovered by problem behaviour in the school or the child's failing grades, and that it's really not discovered by any systematic process of finding learning disabilities.

MRS. JOHNSON: I'd have to ask Heather about that.

MS HEATHER GRANT: Unfortunately that is the way it often happens because the child is not screened prior to entrance into school. Early screening can sort of delineate what the problems are and treat them before behaviour problems and failure results.

MR. McBRYDE: So the early screening is in a sense preventative that it can help solve the problems before they become too serious. I guess the nature of your organization then, is now twofold, like, it's providing service to the members on a fee-for-service basis and the other is to keep up the public pressure on us and others, where that pressure needs to be kept up. I suppose the third

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unction is to sort of help the parents deal with their own frustration about what has happened. How do you deal with that service? Do you sort of do it like Alcoholics Anonymous . . . "I had bad experiences too with my children" or is there a more systematic way to. . .?

MRS. JOHNSON: This is in a process of being developed. It used to be where it was a very volunteer parent to parent sort of thing. At the present time, there are, well, once we get through this hurdle, there will be some classes in parenting which I have been conducting in which we have maybe eight or ten parents of Learning Disabled kids who come in and talk, well, for two days at least, about the miseries they have encountered. Then we try to move on to sorts of ways of handling learning disability, and ways of advocating their child, ways of talking to the psychologists, what sorts of questions can you ask of a psychologist, how will they be able to help you, and where to go for specific kind of help. And we found that this is extremely valuable for the parents who have participated in these programs.

MR. McBRYDE: I had a bit of a surprise myself this morning. I didn't realize that I was still angry about . . . as you were talking, I got in touch with that particular feeling and I want to encourage you and the organization to continue to channel that anger in a very constructive way so that it does help the children. You mention snarling mums; that you keep the snarling mums and dads snarling at us and everybody else that you need to in order to improve the system. Thank you very much.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any further questions? Mr. Boyce.

MR. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, I have in my hand here a card which says, Department of Education, Teachers Professional Card, that hereby certifies that Joseph Russell Boyce, BSA, BED, MED, is the holder of a Permanent Professional Certificate, and they pay this individual considerably more than they pay somebody who hasn't got all those initials behind his name. This supposedly makes this person a . better teacher than someone else. Mr. Chairman, I would like it on the record. I would confess that if I had a child in my class with dyslexia, I wouldn't have a clue of how to teach that child. I mention dyslexia as only one of the many things which happens to a child in the educational system and when somebody says that the teachers, I think all teachers are professionals, I think all teachers try to do the best with the limited resources that are placed at their disposal. I for one, if I had a child that had this learning difficulty, and many people have gone all the way through the system and become high pillars in our society that have dyslexia; they survived the system. But the percentage of these people who get through the system is infinitesimal.

There are many other people out there that we haven't got a clue what kind of learning disability they have. The teachers are aware of it; the teachers in the classroom without any sophisticated type of equipment in their class after they have been involved for a year with Mary, Pete, Sam and Sue, they know that these children have something that they're not getting their message across to them. And the public keeps ignoring it, and until we get the public off their duffs, and realize that they have been lulled into a sense of false security, that professional teachers without the support systems made available, that they're selling all children short; not just the more obvious ones, they're selling all children short. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any further questions?

MR. BOYCE: That wasn't a question, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mrs. Johnson, Heather Grant, Mrs. Jenner, we thank you very kindly for your presentation on behalf of the Manitoba Association for Children for Learning Disabilities. Thank you kindly.

I call Mr. Jake Froese, Father Klysh, Mr. Brian of Antler River School Division, Mr. Michael from the Central Regional Liaison Committee, Fort la Bosse Teachers, Southeast Child Development Advisory Committee. Is there anybody here that wants to make a presentation?

Committee rise. At 2:00 o'clock we'll hear the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents.