

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA
Wednesday, 19 March 1980

Time: 2:30 p.m.

OPENING PRAYER by Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER, Hon. Harry E. Graham (Birtle-Russell): Before we proceed, I should like to draw the honourable members' attention to the gallery, where we have 25 students of Grade 11 standing from the Ashern Central School under the direction of Mr. Bob Moroz. This school is in the constituency of the Honourable Member for St. George.

We have 30 Girl Guides from 82B Guide Company from Fort Garry, under the direction of Mrs. McPhee. This is the constituency of the Honourable Attorney-General.

We have 30 students of Grade 11 standing from Murdoch McKay Collegiate under the direction of Mr. Schroulder. This is in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Transcona.

We have eight visitors from Mankato State University from Minnesota, USA, under the direction of Dr. Lo'Lim.

On behalf of all the honourable members, we welcome you here this afternoon.
The Honourable Attorney-General.

HON. GERALD W. J. MERCIER (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, on a minor point of order, the Girl Guides group is located in the constituency of the Minister of Health.

MR. SPEAKER: Presenting Petitions . . . Reading and Receiving Petitions .

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PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Radisson.

MR. ABE KOVNATS: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has adopted certain Resolutions, directs me to report same, and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Virden, that report of committee be received.

MOTION presented and carried.

MR. SPEAKER: Ministerial Statements and Tabling of Reports . . . Notices of Motion . . .

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

HON. GEORGE MINAKER (St. James) introduced Bill No. 20, An Act to Amend The Change of Name Act.

MR. MERCIER introduced Bill No. 6, An Act to amend The Wills Act and The Mental Health Act; and Bill No. 7, An Act to amend The Manitoba Evidence Act.

HON. KEN MacMASTER (Thompson) introduced Bill No. 8, An Act to amend The Fire Department's Arbitration Act.

HON. JIM DOWNEY (Arthur) introduced Bill No. 16, An Act to amend The Veterinary Services Act. (Recommended by the Lieutenant-Governor)

MR. MINAKER introduced Bill No. 21, An Act to amend The Social Services Administration Act.

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MR. GARY FILMON introduced Bill No. 14, An Act to amend The Law Society Act; and Bill No. 25, An Act to amend An Act to Incorporate the Sinking Fund Trustees of the Winnipeg School Division No. 1.

MR. DAVID BLAKE introduced Bill No. 17, An Act to amend An Act respecting the Agricultural and Community District of Newdale.

ORAL QUESTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. HOWARD PAWLEY (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the First Minister. In view of statements that were made in this Chamber to the effect that the levels of vinyl chloride were in the neighborhood of five parts per million then subsequently amended to the neighborhood of twenty parts per million by the Minister responsible for the Environment, statements made only this past Monday, and in view of the fact that Dow Chemical officials have indicated yesterday that that indeed was not so but that there were 200 to 300 parts per million of vinyl chloride in the atmosphere in and about the derailment at MacGregor, I ask the First Minister if he can advise when his government first became possessed of the knowledge that the parts per million were 200 to 300 parts per million and not five or, alternatively, twenty parts per million as had been earlier indicated by his Minister?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. STERLING R. LYON (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, as the Leader of the Opposition will have observed, the Minister of the Environment is not in the House this afternoon and is in fact attending a public meeting in the Town of MacGregor with a number of officials this afternoon.

I cannot give him a detailed answer to his question except to indicate this, that the information that was available generally to the Ministry was as reported by the Minister in his series of statements following upon this matter over the past several days. I think there may well be, and I am not in any way trying to gloss it over, I think there may well be a misinterpretation as to where the monitoring was taking place. My understanding only from the media, not from direct contact with the spokesman for Dow, is that readings were taken by pressing the monitor either into the snow right at the spot of the very spill; that is only my understanding, I can't vouch for that of first knowledge.

I think what the Minister was attempting to indicate, Mr. Speaker, was that the readings in the area where people were moving about reached a maximum of five parts per million. But I stress to my honourable friend that I am saying that only on the basis of knowledge that has come to me second hand. The safer course would be, of course, for me to take the question as notice and have the appropriate Minister respond when he returns to the House some time later on today.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. PAWLEY: Mr. Speaker, in view of other statements by the Minister responsible for the Environment, statements made throughout the course of this past week that the number of gallons that were spilled were 3,300 gallons; and subsequent information that the Minister was charged with contrary information this past Saturday that the number of gallons were 12,000, rather than 3,300 gallons, can the First Minister advise this House whether or not the First Minister indeed was charged with contrary information this past Saturday, and did not divulge that information to the House during the debates that have taken place on this critical issue since?

MR. LYON: Mr. Speaker, I can answer to this extent for the Minister, and I'm reading now from his statement of Friday, March 14th, and I quote from that statement, it's the second paragraph: "It is estimated that approximately 3,300 gallons of vinyl chloride leaked from the car with the damaged valve. The actual spill is probably greater than this in volume because of the cut in the second

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tank car." Now, at that stage, Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend will recall that it was a matter of hours after the second breached tank car had been found that the Minister made this statement to the House.

He admitted to the House that the spill was greater. As to what estimated knowledge he may have obtained on the weekend, again my honourable friend can ask him that question directly when he returns to the House. But I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that it would have been speculative on the part of the Minister to make any such statement as to a fixed spillage until he had confirmed information of that amount, which apparently came to light yesterday in the statement made by the Dow people. He clearly told the news conference on Sunday that information would have to come from the CNR or Dow because they could not tell firmly apparently over the weekend as to the approximate amounts that had leaked. But he certainly did tell the House that it was 3,300 gallons from the first tank and more from the second tank.

So I'm assured, as I'm sure my honourable friend would be assured, that there was no attempt on the part of the Minister to try to misinform or to mislead the House in any way.

MR. PAWLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am fully aware that on Friday the statement of the Minister was based upon information that he had at that stage, but information revealed yesterday by CN and by Dow Chemical officials indicated that they did indeed provide the Minister with information of approximately 12,000 gallons on Saturday. Can the First Minister advise as to subsequent from Saturday, whether the Minister indeed did divulge that information, either at his press conference or in the House, subsequent to receiving an estimated figure of 12,000 gallons?

MR. LYON: Mr. Speaker, I think the best way to satisfy my honourable friend on this point, which I think will be quickly cleared up by the Minister, is that he was not, and did not want to be in the position of giving a speculative figure on this spillage, except to say that it was a greater amount because of the breach in the second tank that was found only on Friday. So my honourable friend will appreciate again that until that amount had been confirmed by the CNR and by Dow, the Minister would not be in possession of the knowledge.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Johns.

MR. SAUL CHERNIACK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to address the First Minister. In view of the government's rejection of the proposal or suggestion that there be a public inquiry on the spillage at MacGregor, and in view of the announcement by the Honourable Mr. Pepin that he is setting up an inquiry on that accident, will the First Minister assure us that the government, provincial government, will co-operate fully with that inquiry and will make available to it the evidence of his Minister and of all government employees involved?

MR. LYON: Mr. Speaker, we can of course give the assurance that is sought by the Member for St. Johns that there will be full co-operation by this government with respect to the inquiry that will follow as a matter of course by the CTC into the train derailment that took place at MacGregor. The federal Minister, I am informed, has already been in touch with the Minister of the Environment, advising him that there will be the inquiry into the MacGregor spill. It will cover the cause and the safety measures taken from the outset, and as I have indicated, there will be full co-operation by this government with respect to that inquiry.

Another matter of interest, however, Mr. Speaker, according to the information that we have at this stage, which is to be confirmed later from the Minister's office in writing, is that the scope of movement of dangerous material, that topic, is already being covered, according to the federal Minister, in the Mississauga inquiry; and that of course will not form part of the regular inquiry which normally would take place and is going to take place with respect to the derailment at MacGregor.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Speaker, the second part of my question was, will the First Minister undertake to make available to the Commission of Inquiry the

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evidence that would be available from the Minister direct and other Ministers and from government employees?

MR. LYON: Mr. Speaker, I thought I had covered that by saying that this government would extend full co-operation for that inquiry with respect to any information that they may require.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. SIDNEY GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Minister responsible for Corrections. Can the Minister assure us that any representations that are intended to be made by counsel for a rather tragic case of a retardate involved in indecent assault within an institution, that any representations that his counsel would want to make with regard to future confinement and treatment would be considered by either the Minister or members of his department?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Community Services.

MR. MINAKER: Yes, we will give consideration. I am not aware of the specific case that the honourable member is directing the question to me about, but we would give consideration to that request.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, the reason I raise it is to give the Minister the information that he wanted, is that there is a report in, I believe it's today's newspaper, indicating that the solicitor is of the opinion that the people who are in charge of custody would not pay any attention to any remarks that he made concerning the future of this client who is in custody.

MR. SPEAKER: Orders of the Day. The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

MRS. JUNE WESTBURY: Mr. Speaker, I've tried to have this question answered previously; I've reworded it. I hope that I can have an answer today and it concerns my question on the appointment of a Deputy Minister to the Department of Health and the question is addressed to the First Minister. I'm wondering if the First Minister is aware of the serious deterioration which is said to exist between the Minister of Health and the Acting Deputy Minister who was appointed by the First Minister.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

MR. LYON: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the Member for Fort Rouge that knowing both of the gentlemen in question that the allegation that she makes is without foundation.

MRS. WESTBURY: Well then is it true that the Acting Deputy Minister of Health has refused to move into the office usually reserved for the Deputy Minister until his appointment is confirmed?

MR. LYON: Mr. Speaker, I am just informed as a matter of high state that the office in question is being painted. I imagine that might have something to do as to whether or not people want to move into it or stay out of it.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge with a final supplementary.

MRS. WESTBURY: Well I hope I can get a direct answer to this question. Is the First Minister aware that a serious deterioration in morale is being provoked, promoted, within members of the department because of the lack of a Deputy Minister?

MR. LYON: Mr. Speaker, the First Minister is aware of the fact that the province of Manitoba has in the present Minister one of the finest Ministers it's had in many a long year and, Mr. Speaker, this whole House is equally aware of the

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fact that this government has in the Acting Deputy Minister, Dr. Johnson, one of the most dedicated medical people in the history of this province whose service to this province, in elected and non-elected capacities, is something that all of us take some considerable pride in. I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the honourable lady might check her allegations before she makes them loosely in the House.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Lac Du Bonnet.

MR. SAMUEL USKIW (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Finance whether he can indicate what the current lending rate is to Crown institutions or agencies on the most recent quarterly adjusted rate, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Finance.

HON. DONALD W. CRAIK (Riel): Mr. Speaker, rather than answer it in very rough terms, I'll take the question as notice; as he's indicated it's adjusted every three months and it may well have been adjusted in the last week even, but I can tell him that the borrowing rate is 14 percent at the present time.

MR. USKIW: Well, Mr. Speaker, is the Minister suggesting that the borrowing rate being 14 percent that the agencies are then eligible at 14-1/2? I believe it's a half percent differential between the borrowing rate and the rate charged.

MR. CRAIK: The Crown agencies, Mr. Speaker, have been receiving their funding generally at a rate lower because the rate in the market from day to day has been advancing more rapidly than Orders-in-Council can in fact be processed.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet with a final supplementary.

MR. USKIW: Yes, could the Minister indicate, Mr. Speaker, just what the source of the moneys are at 14 percent that the Crown has access to?

MR. CRAIK: Canadian, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Emerson.

MR. ALBERT DRIEDGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I have a question to the Minister of Government Services. Could the Minister responsible for EMO give us a recent update on the flood forecast for the Red River Valley?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Government Services.

HON. HARRY ENNS (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, that question is more appropriately directed to the Minister responsible for the Water Resources Branch, my colleague, the Honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

HON. BRIAN RANSOM (Souris-Killarney): Mr. Speaker, I don't have any up-to-date information but it happens that we are having a staff meeting this afternoon, along with the Minister of Government Services and some of his staff, just to review the situation to look ahead to all eventualities and when we have a further report I will be making that to the House.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Emerson.

MR. DRIEDGER: A supplementary question to the Minister of Agriculture. The elevators in the Red River Valley apparently are plugged and very little grain movement has taken place, and with the slow breakup that we are having this spring, which possibly increases the potential flood danger, could the Minister

indicate whether there is any activity afoot to move some of the grain out of the Red River Valley?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Speaker, to the Member for Emerson and members of the House, the committee that has struck between my department and the Canadian Wheat Board and other officials of the system has met some time in February to put in place a program. I understand at this particular point there has been an inventory made of the grains and the stocks in positions that have been raised and put in protective areas throughout the Red River Valley, and I am expecting a report at any time to identify those elevators or those particular areas that could be in danger and a move would be put on to protect those stocks.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Emerson with a final supplementary.

MR. DRIEDGER: A question to the Minister of Agriculture. Would it be possible to maybe notify the rural municipalities involved in the Red River Valley as to the status, once the reports become forward?

MR. DOWNEY: Yes, Mr. Speaker, and I apologize for omitting one of the other parts of the work that is being done. My department and some of the departments responsible in this area have met with the local reeves in the RMs affected and have had input from them to this particular point, and I will make sure they get the report as it becomes available.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. George.

MR. BILLIE URUSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I direct this question to the Minister of Health and ask him whether he can confirm that the statements that he made in this House, about the last week or the week before, that the Chairman of the District Health Board cast two votes was in fact inaccurate and that there are in fact thirteen members on that Board and the Chairman, when casting his vote, was in effect breaking a tie and only cast one vote; has he checked that matter out and confirmed it?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health.

HON. L.R. (Bud) SHERMAN (Fort Garry): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I have checked that matter out. First I might say that the information that was given to me was conveyed in good faith; it was conveyed in the course of an interview with a member of the media, and it was subsequent to that story in the media that the Honourable Member for St. George raised his question, so that it was not initiated as a statement in the House.

Secondly, I would advise the honourable member that the information was given to me by my closest department officials on the basis of information that had been given to them by the Reeve of Eriksdale, the person in question. That was the information they had from that individual.

It turns out that the Reeve of Eriksdale did not cast two votes; he cast only one. I never challenged his democratic right to cast whatever number of votes. The Constitution --(Interjection)-- I said, in any event, Mr. Speaker, whatever he did he was obviously acting within his democratic rights as Chairman. The point is it was a tie-breaking vote. The point is the Board was split, remains split; it was a tie-breaking vote and the issue has been referred to the Manitoba Health Services Commission for another attempt to resolve a longstanding impasse.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. George.

MR. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister indicate when he will be providing to this House the costing figures dealing with those additional costs that will be incurred in the event that a 20-bed free-standing nursing home will be built in the area? Can he assure us that they will be forthcoming before his Estimates?

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MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health.

MR. SHERMAN: No, Mr. Speaker, I certainly cannot assure him that they will be forthcoming before my Estimates. They will certainly be available during my Estimates, if that plan is agreed and accepted by the parties concerned.

As I have told the honourable member, the issue has been referred once again to the Manitoba Health Services Commission and a further round of meetings is being held to try and break an impasse that has divided the four municipalities in that district for the past two years, or more than two years.

MR. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, can I ask the Minister how does he expect the Board, the District Board, then to make a decision if this kind of information is not provided to those members of the Board and to the members of this House so that they can at least assess this most generous plan that his government has said that they would want that Board to adopt? How can this Board make that decision if this Minister is unwilling to provide that information?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health.

MR. SHERMAN: Very easily, Mr. Speaker, that information will be part of the substance and the subject matter discussed when the Commission meets with representatives from that District Health System Board. And I repeat what I said before to the honourable member, nobody is forcing anybody to do anything. What the government has done is proposed and approved a course of action. It is up to the individual municipalities. If they don't want it, there are many other municipalities in this province, Mr. Speaker, who are looking for personal care homes.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Emerson.

MR. DRIEDGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It appears that the Federal Minister responsible for Lotteries has indicated interest in getting back into the lotteries field. Has the Minister received any correspondence or contact from the Feds indicating that they want to re-enter the lottery field?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Fitness and Amateur Sports.

HON. ROBERT "Bob" BANMAN (La Verendrye): Mr. Speaker, several months ago we signed an agreement with the Federal Government which saw certain funds transferred over to them with regard to the then called Loto Canada. The provinces have now taken over and are running that particular Loto and it is the intention of the provinces to have the Federal Government live up to its agreement that was signed several months ago.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. George.

MR. URUSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Health. Can he confirm to this House that the Board that he says reached an impasse did in fact, in a virtually unanimous decision, indicate to the government, when the government asked them to set their priorities last March, when your government made the announcement that only one nursing home would be built in that district . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, order please. The question is repetitive. Would the Honourable Member for St. George care to rephrase his question?

MR. URUSKI: I have another question, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister indicate to this House which authority would be obligated to pick up those additional costs that certainly will be incurred by building a free-standing nursing home in that area that would be in excess of the normal cost that would be paid for by the per diem that is provided through the government through the Manitoba Health Services Commission to that district.

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MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health.

MR. SHERMAN: Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that the previous government operated on the principle that there would be no free-standing personal care homes built. The only personal care homes to be built would be juxtaposed to hospitals. This government has never endorsed that principle, has never indicated that that was going to be its sole and universal approach to the personal care home problem.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. George with a supplementary.

MR. URUSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister answer my question as to who will pick up those additional costs, Mr. Speaker, and could he indicate

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The question is repetitive.
The Honourable Member for Rossmere.

MR. VIC SCHROEDER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A question for the Minister of Education. In view of the fact that members of his government will shortly be having a meeting with Winnipeg No. 1 School Division Trustees, and in view of the fact that evidence submitted to the Committee on Privileges and Elections indicated that there were some 2,000 children in Winnipeg No. 1 who are not attending school, would the Minister consider placing on the agenda of that meeting a discussion of those 2,000 children and the funding of ways and means of making sure that they get back into school in order to assist them and in order to save us from future costs with respect to the criminal justice system and our health and welfare system?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Education.

HON. KEITH A. COSENS (Gimli): Mr. Speaker, the problem of truancy is one that we're always prepared to discuss with school boards of the province. It's a problem that has been with us for some time. In some areas it has increased in recent years. We are working at all times to try to find some solution to at least diminish the problem. I would be quite prepared to discuss this at any time with Winnipeg School Division No. 1 or in fact, any other division in the province.

MR. SCHROEDER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A supplementary to the Minister of Education. Would the Minister not agree that in terms of the province of Manitoba, this problem is most severe in Winnipeg No. 1, and would he also undertake to attempt to obtain specific funding aimed at Winnipeg No. 1 for this very specific purpose of bringing these children back into the school system?

MR. COSENS: Mr. Speaker, I would only repeat that I am quite prepared, my department is quite prepared to discuss the problem with Winnipeg No. 1 and attempt to come to some solution to the problem. In fact, a complete solution, a partial solution, Mr. Speaker, whatever would be possible. It's a problem that has been with us for some time. Certainly governments in the past have not been able to solve it and we certainly would be very pleased if we could come up with a solution.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Attorney-General.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Member for Transcona asked me a number of questions with respect to a constituent's case. Mr. Speaker, I'm advised that the last known whereabouts of Mr. Kosowan was in Winnipeg on January 15, 1980, and that the RCMP through their investigation are aware that Mr. Kosowan had his automobile repaired and paid cash for those repairs. On January 17, 1980, Mr. Speaker, a Canada-wide warrant was issued against him for theft; and on February 4, 1980 four Canada-wide warrants were issued for abduction. These warrants, Mr. Speaker, are circulated to all police agencies and all border points.

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Further efforts have been undertaken by the department and the RCMP in attempting to locate this gentleman. The RCMP have assigned a senior officer to this case who is in regular consultation with the senior Crown Attorney in my department, Mr. Speaker. Rather than go into specific other efforts that are being made by the RCMP in their attempts to locate this gentleman, I would prefer, Mr. Speaker, to discuss those privately with the member in order that the investigation and the process is not jeopardized.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Transcona.

MR. WILSON PARASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I start my question, I just wanted to assure the Minister of Health that I am not conducting a particular personal investigation into health care in Manitoba at present. I thank the Minister for his answer, I think that will provide some assurance for the person involved, although I must ask why the system of justice had to wait until after January 15th, the time where the kidnapper escaped the police trap, supposedly, to issue the warrant for arrest for theft and for kidnapping, in that the abduction took place in October of 1979.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Speaker, I had asked, having been in receipt of a communication from Mrs. Kosowan that this matter be reviewed, and every effort be made to attempt to assist her in this particular matter. It's unfortunate that the gentleman in question left this particular area prior to the warrants being issued, but every effort has been made since then in attempts to locate him.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Kildonan.

MR. PETER FOX: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to address my question to the Minister responsible for hiring personnel for the administration of the Hansard Services. Can he indicate to the House whether a greater effort can be made to hire personnel since Hansard now is running late, and due to the invitation that we had from the Chair with respect to this service . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I suggest the question should be directed to the Speaker as Hansard comes under the direct control of the Speaker. Unfortunately, you cannot direct a question directly to the Speaker, so I suggest the honourable member meet me in my office.

MR. FOX: I appreciate the suggestion and the ruling of the Chair, but I would respectfully suggest that hiring of personnel for Hansard comes under the Civil Service and not under the Speaker, so therefore I find my question in order. If you wish to rule me out of order, we'll cross that bridge . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I rule the question out of order.
The Honourable Member for St. Johns.

MR. CHERNIACK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to welcome back the Minister of Finance and ask him, assuming he was away on government business, would he inform the House where he has been and what he has done on behalf of the people.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Finance.

MR. CRAIK: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the Member for St. Johns that I was away on government business. I cannot assure him of anything further and beyond that, since it is the execution of executive responsibility that took me there.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Parks, I believe it's the Minister of Mines, Resources and Environmental Management. Is the Minister in any way considering some intervention on the part of Manitobans, many of modest means, some of wealthy means, whose rates in the Riding

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Mountain Provincial Park seem to be termed as almost "confiscatory" especially when they apply to modest income people? I'm indicating, Mr. Speaker, that modest income people were encouraged to have cottages there. The rates are now changed as to, in some cases, be over \$1,000 a year which would be beyond the means of many people of more than modest income.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

MR. RANSOM: Mr. Speaker, that concern, that issue of course is not within the realm of my responsibility, but it does seem to demonstrate the lack of concern that the federal government has for people that have been in that position of being longstanding leasees of cottages in Riding Mountain Park. I can take the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to say that while we expect some review of leases to take place, or the fee structure to take place during the development of our master plans for provincial parks in the province, that we will not be making any increases in fees in this upcoming year.

MR. SIDNEY GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the fact that the Riding Mountain National Park is under federal jurisdiction, but many of the people affected are citizens of the province of Manitoba, and in particular western Manitoba, and I'm just wondering whether the Minister feels that on behalf of these citizens some contact be made to the federal government to determine whether in fact my suspicion is correct, that the rates will merely confiscate modest income people's property and give it to wealthier people; that can be the only result. People without income will be forced to sell their cottages which can only then be purchased by people with a great deal of income.

MR. RANSON: Mr. Speaker, that may well be the case and I'm sure that the honourable member is concerned about it for those individuals, as I am concerned for those individuals, but it is not within the realm of my responsibility as Minister charged with the responsibility for managing Manitoba's parks that I should intervene on the part of individual Manitobans in their relationship with the federal government, unjust as that relationship may be.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I go to a higher authority, I put a question to the First Minister. Would the First Minister look into this question and see whether it is worth raising as between himself and his federal counterpart? We are talking about citizens of the province of Manitoba who have been subjected to what can only be termed as confiscatory taxes. The kind of taxes which some of the honourable members said that I raise for the purpose of taking public ownership of the mining industry, which of course was completely false, and not one cent of that type of taxes has ever been paid by a mining company.

But, Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Minister of Mines and Resources can't merely say that it's not my area of responsibility. The First Minister speaks for the citizens of the province of Manitoba and I would ask him to look into this question and see whether it is worth raising on behalf of people in his, in the Minister of Mines' riding probably?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

MR. LYON: Mr. Speaker, I want the record to show that I readily acknowledge that my honourable friend the Member for Inkster has greater knowledge and has greater expertise in the field of confiscatory taxes than anyone on this side of this House and so when he says that a tax or a payment is confiscatory, Mr. Speaker, I believe him. But I do want to echo in part what my colleague the Minister of Resources said, that this is a matter that is under the jurisdiction of the federal government and of course has to be dealt with by the federal members of Parliament on behalf of their constituents; and I'm sure that all federal members of Parliament, maybe with the exception of two, will be letting the federal government know of their extreme displeasure with this act of almost unconscionable increase that has taken place with respect to citizens of Manitoba, business people in Manitoba who for years and years have either lived in or carried on business in Riding Mountain National Park.

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I agree as a member of this House that what we have seen in the paper does represent an act of unconscionable increase in the summer home charges that are being imposed by the federal government. It makes one wonder how this took place in the interregnum period between a government going out and another government coming in and I certainly share with my honourable friend the sense of indignation that I know is the case with people from all parts of Manitoba who go to Riding Mountain National Park with this act that has taken place by the federal parks branch and I can assure my honourable friend that within the powers that are available to us that we will certainly let that displeasure be known to our federal counterparts.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for The Pas.

MR. RONALD McBRYDE: Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Resources. Some time ago I asked the Minister of Resources about payments to fishermen under the Fish Transportation Subsidy Program. I wonder if the Minister could inform us whether those payments have gone out yet, and if not when those payments will be going out to fishermen?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

MR. RANSOM: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to say that some time ago I answered that question. If the honourable member would refer to Hansard of some two weeks ago, I believe, I had announced that payments had gone out and, in fact contrary to the member's allegation about them being late, they were in fact earlier than they were last year.

MR. McBRYDE: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister for his answer and direct a question to the Minister of Transportation. Since the winter road network will be closing on Friday, I believe is the date, I wonder if the Minister could inform the House whether the necessary goods have been transported into the remote communities and whether there would be any need to attempt to keep the roads open longer?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Highways.

HON. DON ORCHARD (Pembina): Mr. Speaker, as of Friday last week there were eight loads to be delivered on the Me-Ke-Si winter road contract and if my memory serves me correct, some six loads on the balance of the winter roads in northern Manitoba.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for The Pas with a final supplementary.

MR. McBRYDE: Mr. Speaker, another question to the Minister of Transportation and I hope that I'll get a good answer like I did from the Minister of Resources. Some time ago I asked the Minister about a proposal from The Pas Handi-Van Service. I wonder if he can indicate whether that has been approved, up to this time?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Highways.

MR. ORCHARD: Mr. Speaker, that application is very close to the approval stage.

MR. SPEAKER: The time for question period having expired, we'll proceed with Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Government House Leader.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Speaker, before we proceed I must note and congratulate all members of the Legislature on the decorum and the gentlemanly behaviour that

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has gone on during this question period and I just wonder, Mr. Speaker, whether there is any connection with that and the fact that there is no television camera today.

Mr. Speaker, I move seconded by the Minister of Government Services that, Mr. Speaker, do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

MR. SPEAKER: It's been moved by the Honourable Government House Leader, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Government Services . . .

MATTER OF GRIEVANCE

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Elmwood.

MR. RUSSELL DOERN: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a matter of grievance.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order please. The Honourable Member for Inkster on a point of order.

MR. GREEN: No, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the member would yield for a point of privilege and it is a very small point. Yesterday in giving some information to the House I indicated that a memo went from a Mr. Feldman to Mr. Gould. I believe if one looks at the memo it would appear that it went from Mr. Gould to Mr. Feldman, so I just want to correct that.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Elmwood.

MR. DOERN: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a matter of grievance to attack this government's educational policies and in particular in relation to the Winnipeg School Division.

Mr. Speaker, before I begin I would like to say in regard to the Attorney-General's remarks that this government doesn't look good whether the TV cameras are here or not; and I say in regard to their policies on education, I believe that we are really at a crisis state in the city of Winnipeg, that Winnipeg residents in School Division No. 1 are being faced with substantial program cuts which will reduce the quality of education. They are being faced with larger classes of students which makes it extremely difficult for teachers to cope with and that they are being confronted with increased taxes.

Mr. Speaker, the citizens of Winnipeg are being faced with a potential tax rise of some 17 percent for an average home, at an average cost of \$60, and this is, I would say, is the logical outcome of the policies of the Lyon administration, which is to shift taxes from the provincial government onto the municipalities and individuals. This has been going on since they first got elected and it is continuing, even though my friend from Government Services continues to deny it. We know, Mr. Speaker, if the Minister of Government Services says it is not true that it is true because when he says something is true we know it is false, so therefore it is obvious what his problem is.

Mr. Speaker, the property tax rebate system has been unchanged in two and one-half years and there is no indication coming from the government side to reduce or relieve the property taxpayer across the province and in the city of Winnipeg in particular.

Now I know that the Minister thinks that he is a high roller when he tells us that he is going to increase the \$1 million special grant for the city of Winnipeg to \$1.5 million. He thinks that is a substantial amount of money. But in relation to the extra costs, the extra responsibilities incurred by the citizens of Winnipeg Division No. 1, on behalf of not only their own taxpayers and their own citizens but on behalf of the people who live throughout the Metropolitan Winnipeg area and throughout the province of Manitoba, I say that this is a drop in the bucket. \$1.5 million on what could be a \$7 million grant, a grant that is estimated by the Winnipeg School Board in relation to their requirements.

And I want to say right here, Mr. Speaker, that I am not just expressing the opinion of one segment of society. The case in Winnipeg is supported by the teachers. It is supported by the parents. It is supported by the trustees in the

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Winnipeg School Division No. 1, and it is also supported, Mr. Speaker, by the Manitoba Association of School Trustees. So this isn't some simple business, as outlined by the Lieutenant-Governor, among others, that this was the teachers' fight; this was something that the teachers were cooking up. This is something that is supported by teachers, trustees, parents and everyone who is concerned about education in the province.

Now you know one of the main questions that we have been talking about in the last few years in this province and that this administration talked about a lot during the last election - they in fact probably scored some points on this - they talked about back to the basics, back to the basics. That is how you save money, Mr. Speaker. You provide the bare minimum of services and you provide the bare minimum of funding and what you do, in particular - and I know that some of my colleagues who served in the post of Minister of Education, like my colleague from Burrows, my colleague from Seven Oaks, they were always told that we were interested in frills, we should get back to the essentials - get back to the basics and this is perfectly consistent and perfectly, I guess, symbolic of what the present Minister is talking about.

Well, I want to list a dozen of so frills that this government is telling the City of Winnipeg that it should eliminate; that it will not fund; that it does not feel should come with the ambit of normal provincial grants.

Well, what are they? Things like the fact that, say, the city of Winnipeg in the Winnipeg School No. 1 is confronted with a lot of poor and underprivileged people, both poor and working, and poor and on welfare, and teaching the poor is a frill; and the fact that they have a large transient population and that they shouldn't be concerned with that; and that there are thousands of people of native extraction and that they shouldn't be concerned with frills like native education; that there are immigrants who pour into our country and into our province and usually first land and first find their home in the centre core of Winnipeg, and there is not sufficient consideration given to them, so they, therefore, must be a frill. The nursery schools are a frill. There are 40 nursery schools in the city of Winnipeg, not a penny for them. There was a big fight last summer, Mr. Speaker, about summer courses for underprivileged students. We had to fight that particular case.

There are some schools that are talking about eliminating music. There are some schools that are talking about eliminating part of their French program. The R.B. Russell School, which was, I think, one of the most imaginative and innovative schools in the province, is going to be eliminating electrical courses. --(Interjection)-- Shocking is right.

They are going to also provide us with larger classes; I am talking about the province. The Minister doesn't seem to be concerned with a few more students in each class. If I push him hard enough and long enough I suppose he might agree with some so-called expert who must have been dropped from the sky and landed on his head, who came up the figure that you can have as many as 42 students in a classroom. Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, I was once a teacher --(Interjection)-- 48 on a bus, one on a motorcycle. So, Mr. Speaker, it really is mind-boggling to think that some so-called educator could imagine that a teacher could handle a class with 42 students in it. I tell you that I taught for a number of years. I taught with my honourable friend for a year at Stonewall Collegiate, his home turf, and I can tell you when you have a dozen or 15 or 16 students you are laughing, and I have had classes like that on occasion; I once had a few classes like that in the River East School Division. When you have classes of 30 it is pretty tough; when you have 35 or 36, boy, let me tell you that is the maximum, that is a problem then for the teacher and it's a problem for the student because of the sheer numbers and the magnitude of the class.

I am not talking here, Mr. Speaker, about university. I am not talking about students who are older and students who may, in some cases, be 70 or 100 in the class. I am talking about juveniles and minors. When you cram them into classes in confined spaces, it becomes an impossibility.

So I list for you the so-called frills according to provincial funding and provincial formula, and I say that the Minister, when he talks about going back to the basics, and his First Minister and his government, they are talking about some completely out-dated notion of the Three R's and the little red school house. They're not with the times; they're not with the problems.

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In the case of the city of Winnipeg, they are ignoring the social cost of these problems. If the Minister of Education isn't going to pay the bills for these young people, these immigrants, these poor people, then I tell you that his colleague in the front bench in Health and Social Development is going to pay some of those bills, and that his seatmate, the Minister of Corrections, he's going to pick up the tab. So take your pick. If you're not going to provide extra attention to people who are underprivileged and they need extra attention - they don't need equal attention, they need extra attention - you're going to wind up with more juvenile delinquents, you'll wind up with greater police costs, a greater bill in corrections, and more court costs. That is the long-run consequence.

And you know, we had a great leader in our party named J. S. Woodsworth, and I'm sure that if I could dredge up his old speeches from the 1910s and '20s we would be hearing the same sort of problems and probably the same sorts of proposals, namely, that the needs of the people in the centre core of Winnipeg must be met or else there is a social cost and ultimately a dollar sign.

Mr. Speaker, I represent the Elmwood area and the constituency of Elmwood, which has two school divisions. The central part of my riding is in the Winnipeg School Division, and the East Kildonan component is in the River East School Division. And Elmwood, in the central region is older than say, the east end of Elmwood, or the East Kildonan area of my particular riding. And we have schools in there which are confronted with declining enrolments. We have schools which are older which need special support from the provincial government.

My people formed a citizen group headed by people I had never met before who fought the good fight on the George V school. That was a little different, that was an older school that needed some structural support, and if my information is correct, in spite of the fact that they made their case, in spite of the fact that it was logical to repair that building for a hundred or a couple of hundred thousand dollars, when they went to the provincial government they were refused any support. I wait to hear any final comments from the Minister, but I really expected that when the citizens of Elmwood who finally got support from the Winnipeg School Division, when the division went to the Public Schools Finance Board that they would get the grant. Now maybe the Minister can comment on that. If they got the grant, that's fine. But it took a tremendous amount of pressure and persuasion and endless meetings on the part of the citizens in an attempt to get \$100,000 to \$250,000 to repair a school.

Now a more interesting case. In my riding, Mr. Speaker, is the Sir Sam Steele School. That's a small school, it's an older school but it's in beautiful condition, and that school is in danger of closing. Because in that particular school, it's in an older part of town and there is a declining enrolment, and I say that that school is a sample of what is being dealt with by the Winnipeg School Division and is a problem that the Minister has to grapple with. And Sir Sam Steele, Mr. Speaker, it kind of works like this. There are people, a lot of young people who are looking at homes in the Elmwood area, there are a lot of older people; and one of the things that is happening that is really good that I welcome and am delighted with about my riding, is young couples coming in with young families, buying old houses, rehabilitating them, painting them, fixing them, living in them, bringing up their children, and sending them to the neighbourhood schools. Now here's the problem and here is the dilemma. As these schools close, one of the first things that the young people in the area do is move. The other point is that people who are looking into an area, looking at housing, give tremendous consideration to schools in the neighbourhood, and if you tell a young family that there is a school three blocks away, or one block away, they will move there. If you tell them there is a school there that's going to close, or it might close, or there is talking about closing, they may say, well I'm not gambling, this is a very big investment and I'm not going to fool around. And if you tell them that the nearest school is a mile away or half a mile away or three-quarters of a mile away, they'll say, we'll move closer to that school.

So you get this kind of vicious circle, as you close the schools you get the younger couples going farther away. So if you close all the schools in the centre core, and my colleague the Member for Winnipeg Centre, he could speak on this, he spoke on it all through our administration . . . --(Interjection)-- No, not at this moment. . . . and he could speak on it again as a person who represents the centre

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core of Winnipeg. You close the schools and you will get a shift in population, and the younger children and the younger families will move out of the area. So then you can close more schools. And then you can close more schools, and more people will move away, and eventually you can close all the schools in that area, and we can eventually have all the schools in the city of Winnipeg closed. And then we can re-open a whole bunch of new ones in the suburban areas. Because I'm telling you that's what's happening.

My friend from Emerson, he doesn't believe me. But he's only familiar with the Emerson picture. In fact, I'm more familiar with the Emerson picture than he is of the Winnipeg picture. --(Interjection)-- Well, I'm simply stating a fact, Mr. Speaker. I always spent my holidays in beautiful Emerson riding, and I even attended school once for a few days down there in Overstoneville, which is a very tiny place in the riding. I trust there's a plaque there somewhere in that little schoolhouse signifying the event.

So Mr. Speaker, I say that these problems are very fundamental, and that the Minister is not coming up with answers for them. What are the answers he gives us? I say he is not looking at the total picture. He is a very suave person; he's much suaver than when I used to know him, when he and I taught in 1962-63. Then he was more sort of woolly and lovable. Now he's the Minister - he used to wear curling sweaters in those days, Mr. Speaker. Now it's all these three piece suits, all with vests. I heard, this is only a rumour, that he has a vest for his curling sweater today. And he gives us these glib, legalistic, lawyer-like answers, and you know, he's a very intelligent person, and he's a very likeable person. I have always said that, I have always described him in those terms. But, when it comes to handling questions and handling his department, he is very glib. He can sleep at night easy, he has no problems, doesn't wrestle with any problems, because he has a very standard answer. No matter what we say he either says, we will look into it, like all the other Ministers, but he just says it is declining enrolment, you see, what can I do. It is just going down, there are fewer students, so there are fewer provincial dollars and that is his speech, that is him, that is the essence of him as Minister; that is not the essence of him as a man, but as Minister he is giving us trite answers to complicated problems.

Mr. Speaker, his statement about declining enrolment and the exact proportion in regard to provincial support, I say that is a pavlovian response. It is just automatic. He also says that there is an absolute increase in funding. He tells us that they are getting more dollars, they are giving more dollars, there's a few more dollars every year than the year before, and he tells us that they are funding the basics. You know, they are not interested in frills. Educators have to make this hard reassessment and I am not going to talk now, Mr. Speaker, about universities, I'll save that for the department. I am talking now about the secondary and primary system of education. Then he talks about pupil/teacher ratios.

So if you ask him something he says we are giving more money or he says it is declining enrolment or he says back to the basics or he says we have a pupil/teacher ratio, and that is it. Right? If you have those answers, you know, you just give them those answers. Right?

I am worried about the Honourable Member for Rossmere. He is a young impressionable member and he hears these answers and he believes some of them. The rest of us we don't believe any of them, but he would like to believe them.

Mr. Speaker, one of the issues that the Minister is not dealing with is that when you get to declining enrolment there are certain costs that continue regardless of declining enrolment. We all know that declining enrolment is the answer. I mean we know that that is the problem, it is not the answer. He thinks it is the answer, we think it is the problem, and he is not tackling the funding portion, not coming up with solutions or programs to these problems.

MR. HANUSCHAK: And the best breeders aren't doing anything about it either.

MR. DOERN: That's right. Take the school buses, when you have declining enrolment, if you have a bus that picks up 40 kids and it goes down to 30 kids, does that mean you should cut the transportation budget by 25 percent, will that help? You see there are certain problems, Mr. Speaker, that even when there are fewer students you still have those costs; when you have a school with empty

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classrooms you still have heating costs that are roughly the same, you still have lighting costs that are quite similar; and in some cases, you know, the answer I suppose it close the schools and so on. Well, we know that the members over there, they are a little nervous about closing schools. Some of those good south-western Manitobans said the other day, said the New Democrats are building the schools and the Tories are closing them, and they want the Minister to get involved in that, they want him to fight that issue. I hope the Member for Pembina, the Minister of Highways and Transportation, I hope that he gets into that and fights for his issues.

So, Mr. Speaker, there are costs like that and I am not inventing these costs, I am sure that the Minister when he meets with the Winnipeg School Board will hear about this; when he meets with the Teachers' Society, he will hear this; when he meets with parents, concerned parents, he will hear this; and he will hear it from us. He has heard it already, he will hear it today, he will hear at great length during his Estimates.

And when he talks about giving more money he is ignoring the inflationary factors in today's society, that though he is giving more money, according to the various school divisions there is a relative decline in provincial funding. So we have to talk in absolute and relative terms and the figures seem to conclusively demonstrate that there is a lesser and lesser and lesser portion of school costs, education costs, that are borne by the provincial government.

The third point, of course, is that he is not concerned about these over-grant teachers, these over-grant teachers; and I think the Minister gave us some very confusing, maybe deliberately deceptive figures the other day about ratios in regard to teachers, and I think there was a confusion there about teachers that are funded by the province and that are paid for by the divisions, employed and authorized. I say to the Minister that when he says that there are too many teachers being used and that the ratios are out of whack, I say to him that that is the assessment of those school divisions, and that is the assessment of those school boards; that isn't the assessment of the teachers, the teachers have a right to be interested in protecting their jobs, they have a right to fight for a high quality of education; but the decisions are made by the school board. I am sure the Minister appreciates the difference that those final decisions are made on that side of the table.

Mr. Speaker, what is the government's problem then? Well, the problem is that they seem to lack the understanding or lack the appreciation of some of these issues. They don't seem to have any policies that can grapple with education in the 1980s in Manitoba, and they are certainly not grappling with the central problem of declining enrolment. I will tell you why, Mr. Speaker, one of the problems, the key to the question, one key to the question would be dollars, wouldn't it? The government doesn't have the bucks, that is one of the Minister's problems. Maybe he is not fighting for the bucks, that is the thing we don't know. We don't know what he is doing in Cabinet as to whether he is a forceful advocate for education, whether he can stand up to some of the ministers with departments who bang the table and shout for the need for more highways, more drainage, law and order, more jails. As the Minister of Economic Development said, we got more of everything in this province, we got more sand and more birds, we got more culture, more everything, lots of "dis" and lots of "dat". I think that he was quoted in the paper as saying that, Mr. Speaker.

I say that the reason that the Minister may not have the dollars, and the reason that the government may not have the dollars, is because the Manitoba economy is in a slump. That is the fundamental problem, because of the bankruptcy of government economic policy, that is the fundamental problem. And with population decline and with people leaving, and with taxpayers leaving, with a lower birth rate, there are fewer students, there are fewer teachers today, and there are fewer taxpayers, Mr. Speaker. --(Interjection)-- Well, if there are more people working and there are fewer students, then you should have the money to provide for education.

So, Mr. Speaker, I say that the government has been in office, for two and a half years they've been in office. This is their ball game. All those good old standard arguments for the first and second year about, oh, I've got to clean up the mess and the Premier and all his jargon about elephants and about rat infested, all that old stuff we've all heard. It was pretty good the first time. The hundredth time it wasn't quite as good.

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The Member for Kildonan gives me this article from the Trib of twelve days ago saying, in effect, that Premier Sterling Lyon must have forgot to flip his calendar. He flipped his lid but he didn't flip his calendar. And when he gave his . . . I'm talking about the Trib said this. The Trib said let's look to the future. Let's stop looking for these old arguments about what went on when the NDP was there. Here's what they say, "Aw common Mr. Lyon, there's only so far you can float on that leaky old ship. Stop rewriting your old speeches." And of course that's all that we hear.

So I'm saying to the Minister don't give us this stuff about declining enrollment and you're locked in and if it goes down 100 we reduce our grant appropriately. And we don't want to hear about monitoring. If the Minister is going to re-examine the greater Winnipeg education levy, and so on, let him say so. If he wants to make major adjustments in there let him say so. If he wants to look at some of the bigger issues and the tougher issues and the ones that are pretty hard to tackle, maybe insoluble, he's going to have to look at other issues, maybe the single division for metro Winnipeg. Those are some of the things he should be considering.

So now, Mr. Speaker, we come down to the crunch for Winnipeg, a meeting on March 21st. The Minister said a week ago, eight days ago, that whatever is going to happen would happen; it was too late, he couldn't do anything. It was all over because they missed the budget cut-off. Well, they didn't miss the cut-off. The Minister was mistaken on that point. They now have time. They now have between now and Monday night to indicate to the City of Winnipeg where they're going to make a major revision in their funding. So they'll meet with the board on Friday and the board is going to meet with us to give us a briefing, and then on Monday night is the filing deadline for the School Division. And Wednesday night is council meeting, when the City of Winnipeg councillors will strike the mill rate and, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to predict the Minister's response right now. I'm going to put words in his mouth and I think he is going to speak right after me so he can easily repudiate what I am going to say.

Mr. Speaker, may I ask how much time I have left?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has nine minutes.

MR. DOERN: Nine minutes, I'll only use part of that, Mr. Speaker.
--(Interjection)-- Use it all. Okay, I might use it all.

Mr. Speaker, I say that we can predict the Minister's response. We know the Minister well and we know the government better. They're going to monitor. They're going to study. They monitor everything. The head monitor is actually the Minister of Health; he's the head monitor. The Minister of Labour is pretty good at that and so are the other . . . I'm sure when they took their lessons in Cabinet that the First Minister told them to say that. He said either take it as notice or say you're monitoring it, and you can't go wrong. You give them one or the other and the Opposition, they'll accept it. Well the Minister of Transportation, the new Minister, not my buddy the old Minister --(Interjection)-- The good old Minister. The new Minister agreed that's what instructions he had. Those were the tips that he received. --(Interjection)-- This is my own speech. It's my own handwriting, my own thinking.

Mr. Speaker, I say that the Minister will meet with the board and he'll come out into the hallway. He'll smile. He's a good looking guy. He'll open up his suit button, show them his vest, and he'll say we're going to monitor. No, we're going to study the situation. He'll say study because it's a synonym but it's better and more appropriate in this case. We'll study the situation. We're going to examine the brief of the board. We had a very sincere, frank and candid exchange of opinions and we are very receptive.

I hope I can use up enough words, Mr. Speaker, because then the Minister will have a problem trying to think of words that I left out.

He'll say we had a very good talk with Mrs. Spivak, and her board and the Premier and I, we all registered our concern. We raised some valid points. And in spite of economic constraints and restraints and so on and the BNA Act and Section 92 and 91 and 90 and 93 . . . But then they will say to the Chairman of the School Board, they'll say, "Did you get any money?" And she'll say, "No, not a penny but we got a promise that the Minister will . . ." First of all, he's

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going to go into crisis consultation. He's going to go night and day from Friday, 11 or 12 o'clock until Monday night. --(Interjection)-- No he's going all weekend. He's going to miss church. He's not going to curl on Sunday and he's going to work on this problem and then he's going to give the Winnipeg School Division an answer. And guess what the answer is? Can't do it, not enough time but, never mind, we are going to study this. For the next year I'm going to put on my experts. I'm going to really tackle the problems. And that's going to be the answer. It's going to appear to be action. Action-looking, action-like but it's going to be the old Tory inaction. It's the old Tory inaction, the old words, the old gestures, and not a penny more, Mr. Speaker, not a penny more for the taxpayers in the Winnipeg School Division.

So, in conclusion and to give the Minister an opportunity to respond - I know he is going to respond. --(Interjection)-- No, he's not going to respond? He has to respond, Mr. Speaker. We encourage him to respond and no matter what he says we're going to monitor his response, every word. And I say, Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, that I condemn this administration, this department and this Minister for not meeting the challenges of the 1970's, the late 1970's and the 1980's, and for being responsible for a distinct deterioration of the public school system in Manitoba.

MOTION presented and carried, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of Supply with the Honourable Member for Radisson in the Chair for the Department of Civil Service and the Honourable Member for Virden in the Chair for the Department of Highways.

CONCURRENT COMMITTEES OF SUPPLY

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

MR. CHAIRMAN, Morris McGregor (Virden): I call the committee to order. We are on Item 4.(a) - the Member for Rossmere.

MR. SCHROEDER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm just wondering whether the Minister could inform us as to how much of the road maintenance in the province of Manitoba is being subcontracted out to private contractors, that is snow clearing operations and that sort of thing?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

HON. DON ORCHARD (Pembina): The only time we would do routine maintenance work with other than government equipment is upon occasion with municipalities by using their equipment.

MR. SCHROEDER: How about the Whiteshell Provincial Park, Provincial Road, I believe 307, 309, is that not contracted out?

MR. ORCHARD: No, it has not been contracted out to private people.

MR. SCHROEDER: I would hope that the Minister would check his facts on that. I believe that it's been contracted out to a contractor at Seven Sisters Falls who has been operating those roads throughout the winter, much to the dismay and consternation of certain people living in the Whiteshell Park because they have not have satisfactory service in terms of snow clearing on their lanes.

MR. ORCHARD: I think, by and large, my answer still stands. Apparently what has transpired on that stretch of road is the Parks Department itself used to do the maintenance. Their machinery broke down and in the interim of getting department machinery in there on a temporary basis, apparently some private machinery was used.

MR. SCHROEDER: Are these roads then going to be maintained next year by the Parks Department, or is this going to be a permanent function of the Department of Highways. That is, my understanding is that we started off last year with

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Parks Department, or Natural Resources, controlling the operations out of the village of Rennie, Manitoba; they had a maintainer which had broken down, there was less than a few thousand dollars worth of repairs required, apparently the capital costs - you didn't have the funds to fix up that maintainer - and at the same time there was a transfer out of the Parks Department into Highways. Is the Minister now saying that next year this will be a Parks Department function again, and that the Parks Department will be doing the clearing.

MR. ORCHARD: Mr. Chairman, on the provincial road system within the park, next year it will be my department that will be maintaining snow removal and clearance on those roads.

MR. SCHROEDER: Will it be doing that with its own equipment, I would assume out of Beausejour or some other district in that vicinity?

MR. ORCHARD: It will be department equipment, whether it is specifically from Beausejour or deployed from Winnipeg. It depends on the availability of equipment that is surplus to the needs.

MR. SCHROEDER: Yes, Mr. Chairman, on that could I also suggest that some consideration be given to using the equipment which the government currently has, although it is not in the Minister's Department. When this function was transferred from Parks to Highways the maintenance equipment was left with the Parks Branch and is sitting there, and the Parks Branch still has the same number of employees working out at Rennie, at least that is my information; and so what we have accomplished for the past year appears to be a situation where you have a private contractor doing the work, and in addition to that we have all of the employees of government still there, and in addition to that we have Highways equipment sitting in the Parks Department which doesn't want to fix it because it has nothing to do with the equipment anymore because it is now a function of the Highways Department. It would seem to me that either the grader and other equipment should be sold or should be transferred to the Highways Department or maybe employees currently in the Parks Department could be transferred to Highways and operate that very same equipment out of Rennie.

MR. ORCHARD: Mr. Chairman, I think it is a matter of semantics. First of all, when the Member for Rossmere implicates that Highways equipment is sitting in the Parks Branch, what you mean is equipment used on highways, not Highway Department equipment, because none of our equipment is sitting there broken down and unused.

I am not familiar, of course, with the specifics on the situation, but I am quite sure that the Member for Rossmere should point out those kind of economies to the Minister responsible for the Parks Service because it would be within his department's jurisdiction to make sure that the personnel and equipment are deployed properly.

MR. SCHROEDER: Yes, on that, I had privately informed the Minister in charge down there of the fact that that equipment was there and broken down and appeared not to be functioning.

There is just one other comment and that is if Highways is going to be doing this next year I would hope that the people in charge would check with the Parks Department and discuss with their personnel out at Rennie or wherever the procedure which had been followed by the cottagers up in the Whiteshell in the past. My understanding is that in the past if the cottagers wanted their roadways cleared they had to prepare applications, take them to the Parks Office at Rennie, pay \$50 or whatever the fee is and then they had very satisfactory clearing services for the winter. This past year has been very unsatisfactory and hopefully with the transfer to the Highways Department next year the level of service will be back up to where it was last year.

MR. ORCHARD: Mr. Chairman, it's my understanding that just such a situation is being followed up right now. Cottage owners will make that same application to Parks personnel and the Parks personnel will liaise with our department personnel to look after driveway cleaning and that type of maintenance.

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MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Emerson.

MR. DRIEDGER: Mr. Chairman, further to the questioning that the Member for Rossmere had, maybe this is repetitive but for clarification purposes, is there an agreement between the parks people and highways regarding the maintenance of some of the Parks roads and snowploughing at the present time?;

MR. ORCHARD: Yes in some cases, but the Department of Highways primary responsibility in parks is, first off, only the PR roads or the PTH roads within the park system and that is my responsibility.

MR. DRIEDGER: Further to that I'd like to refer to an instance in the south east corner by Moose Lake where Highway 308 goes through from 12 all the way up to Falcon Lake, and we have approximately six miles of road from Moose Lake to Birch Point; and what has happened on occasion is that a special machine has come out all the way, driving 30 miles with the blade up, to grade six miles of road and go back when we have our highways machines going right by there; and I'm wondering if it's in the best interests of economy and service if there could be some liaison worked out between the parks people on servicing of some of these roads at the same time when they're doing the PRs. It makes it look a little awkward for the people in the area when a machine comes tearing down there. One day we have the government grader going by and the next day a machine comes empty 30 miles to do six miles of road. If there could be some synchronization of policy worked out it would look an awful lot better.

MR. ORCHARD: Mr. Chairman, a similar sort of arrangement as to what I described for the Member for Rossmere, a liaison with the Parks Branch is certainly possible but not always arranged, in other words Highways Department equipment is not going to make that plough pass without the specific request of the Parks people and it's been a problem with the liaison between the two departments but that's being trimmed up.

MR. DRIEDGER: One further question then. Would the onus be on the Parks people to request this arrangement with these people or could that be worked out jointly between the two?

MR. ORCHARD: Mr. Chairman, the Highways Department will go in on the request of the Parks Branch. The department personnel have no authority to plow that six mile stretch as you indicate without the request of Parks Branch. We can't make our claim back then.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Burrows.

MR. HANUSCHAK: Yes, one question with respect to maintenance of roads and parks. Is there provision within this appropriation for the maintenance of a road in the Whiteshell Provincial Park known as the Jarmoc Road?

MR. ORCHARD: Mr. Chairman, if the Jarmoc Road has a PR number on it we would maintain it. If it doesn't have a PR number we won't maintain it.

MR. HANUSCHAK: I see.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(a). The Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. ADAM: Yes, Mr. Chairman. We're getting into the big money here and I think we should perhaps get a little more information from the Minister on what is happening in this department. Where do we find the SMYs here on this?

MR. ORCHARD: The Highway Maintenance has. . .

MR. ADAM: 771 . . .

MR. ORCHARD: 771 is the number.

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MR. ADAM: These are all people working on an hourly basis or is there any permanent staff outside of administration?

MR. ORCHARD: Mr. Chairman, the biggest majority of that 771 are hourly people.

MR. ADAM: They would not then therefore come under the Civil Service. is that correct?

MR. ORCHARD: Well, they are classified, Mr. Chairman, as departmental employees.

MR. ADAM: Therefore, their contracts are negotiated on an hourly basis with the MGEA?

MR. ORCHARD: Well, the hourly rate and the hours of operation are negotiated with between the employees and the MGEA.

MR. ADAM: Are there any negotiations taking place at the present time?

MR. ORCHARD: The MGEA is negotiating as mentioned between the Civil Service Commission and MGEA right now; certainly.

MR. ADAM: Could the Minister, or is this not part of his jurisdiction, but could the Minister advise or does it make part of the contract, the agreement? When employees get overtime, how many hours do they work before they get overtime? Mr. Chairman, normally, just as a preamble, normally if you work eight hours you get a regular salary. If you go into overtime you get time and a half for a certain number of hours, and if you go over another certain number of hours you get maybe double time. This is the question that I'm asking the Minister to provide for me.

MR. ORCHARD: We pay overtime rates, Mr. Chairman, on the basis of X number of hours per week and then overtime after this target level is reached. It varies between classification of personnel within Maintenance. Not everyone operates under the same strict rules.

MR. ADAM: Then it's based on a weekly rate; the overtime is based on hours worked per week?

MR. ORCHARD: Well, Mr. Chairman, it's based on both a daily rate for some type of employee and a weekly rate for others, and it's written into the agreement for each type of employee, as to whether they are on a daily overtime calculation or a weekly overtime calculation.

MR. ADAM: I wonder if the Minister could now tell us what is the weekly hours, regular hours; and what is the daily regular hours for the different classifications of people working.

MR. ORCHARD: Well, Mr. Chairman, that's all spelled out in the agreement which we don't have with us, but it's an agreement that is sanctioned by the MGEA on behalf of the employees with the department and, you know, I would suppose, I don't think there is any reason why you shouldn't have an agreement if that would enable you to pursue this matter further. I don't think there is any restriction. If there is, I will have to abide by it.

MR. ADAM: Well, I'm concerned; there has been complaints in the past where people have worked ten hours a day and not get any overtime, and if this is a matter for negotiation between the Civil Service Commission and MGEA, that's fine. But it seems to me we're being asked to authorize \$37 million, almost \$38 million, and surely we would like to have some information as to how the employees are being looked after and their working conditions, and so on. Because I have had a number of complaints over the years on this particular point.

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MR. ORCHARD: Mr. Chairman, if the Member for Ste. Rose has received complaints from Highways Department staff employed under this appropriation, he should carry out his responsibilities as an MLA representing those people and have them file a grievance. If they have a legitimate complaint as to the hours worked and the remuneration received for those hours of work or employment, it is written into their contract, and if there is a violation of either hours worked or pay, that can be rectified by the grievance procedure. It's very straightforward. It's been in existence for a number of contract years and hasn't varied significantly.

MR. ADAM: That is the reason why I am trying to get this information so that we know, really know what is going on. But if it is not available I don't suppose we can pursue it much further if we don't have the information to deal with these complaints, it then becomes difficult to deal with them.

MR. ORCHARD: Well, Mr. Chairman, if the Member for Ste. Rose would like to give me specifics right now on a particular employee's complaint, I will certainly pursue that posthaste if he has an example that he could give me today.

MR. ADAM: Mr. Chairman, if we had the information that I have asked for here today, when someone comes to us and makes a complaint in regard to overtime or working conditions, we can probably give him the information right away without having to go through a whole motion of grievances and going to his steward or to whoever is looking after this. That doesn't always work to the best advantage anyway going through the stewards and so on, shop stewards, whoever is in charge. Perhaps we could, if there is no information available on that, perhaps the Minister could tell us then if the appropriation for last year, what part has been expended.

MR. ORCHARD: The appropriation for Maintenance was part of the special warrant in which we had increased funding into the Maintenance Program, so we're overexpended.

MR. ADAM: Yes, there was a special warrant for Maintenance; was that \$6.4 million or \$6.6 million?

MR. ORCHARD: Almost \$6.6 million, Mr. Chairman.

MR. ADAM: \$6.6 million for last year, which brings us up to \$42 million for Maintenance?

MR. ORCHARD: No, it doesn't, Mr. Chairman, because \$5.4 million of that is attributed to the Maintenance Program, but in deducting other aspects - I'll give him an exact figure here. The Member for Ste. Rose could add \$2,860,000 to the \$32,175,000.00.

MR. ADAM: \$268?

MR. ORCHARD: No, \$2,860,000.00.

MR. ADAM: Oh, \$2,860,000 to the \$35 million?

MR. ORCHARD: No, no, to the \$32 million.

MR. ADAM: Oh, here.

MR. ORCHARD: Now, Mr. Chairman, to help understand, a portion of that is in the additional wages, as I explained yesterday, that we're not, never are, cannot properly be budgeted for because we don't know what the increase is going to be granted by the Civil Service when we draw up the Estimates; and then the other thing is that last winter we had a prolonged maintenance period, as the Member for Ste. Rose can well appreciate with the excessive amounts of snow, and then we had a prolonged spring which required more than normal upgrading of the roads, the

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provincial roads, the non-surfaced roads, to bring them back into condition after the tough spring that we went through last year. And that's the additional amounts that are involved in that overexpenditure.

MR. ADAM: And of the \$6 million, there is \$3.8 million - \$2.816 million added to the Maintenance Program from 6.6 of a special warrant.

MR. ORCHARD: About \$2,860,000.00.

MR. ADAM: Yes, and so there is . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hour of 4:30 having arrived, I move that committee rise.
Committee rise.

SUPPLY - CIVIL SERVICE

MR. CHAIRMAN, Abe Kovnats (Radisson): This committee will come to order. I would ask the honourable members to turn to Page 16 of the Main Estimates, Department Civil Service, Resolution No. 25, item 1. Civil Service Commission, (a) Salaries.

The Honourable Minister.

MR. MacMASTER: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to take this opportunity to review some of the major activities in the area of personnel administration undertaken by the Civil Service Commission over the past year in the implementation of government policy in this important area of personnel management.

You may recall, Mr. Chairman, that our government made the decision, implemented through last years Estimates, which centralized responsibility for total personnel management function in government back with the Civil Service Commission.

Much of the activity of the commission during the past fiscal year has been highlighted by the reorganization of the various functions within the commission and has involved the integration of responsibilities for classification, wage and salary administration, personnel records administration, staff training and development, staff relations and collective bargaining, with former responsibilities in the area of recruitment, selection and appeals.

The nature of that reorganization, Mr. Chairman, and the functional responsibilities of the various divisions and branches within the Civil Service Commission are outlined in detail in the 62nd Annual Report of the Civil Service Commission, which I tabled in the Legislature, Friday, February 29th. I believe that a review of that report confirms that each of the divisions and branches within the commission are working efficiently and effectively and that the reorganization has succeeded in accomplishing our goal of strengthening and revitalizing the role of the Civil Service Commission.

Centralization of the personnel function has proved successful not only with respect to providing a closer relationship among the various components of personnel management but also through the provision of a more comprehensive personnel service to departments of government which are the major recipients of the service provided by the commission.

One area of accomplishment I'd like to address, Mr. Chairman, involves the commitment outlined in my remarks last year to rationalize the various categories of employment which our government found to exist within the Civil Service. I'm pleased to advise that as a result of an extensive review of the categories of employment over the past year, a new and fairer system for categorizing provincial employees into three categories, as opposed to the previous five, has been accomplished. The new system is designed to tighten up the definition, control and accountability of the various categories of provincial employees. The system is consistent with recommendations from the Manitoba Government Employees' Association and my government's written commitment to end the abuses and inequities which had developed under the previous administration.

Provincial employees will be categorized as regular, term or contract employees. Regular employees are those selected through the normal Civil Service competition who carry a continuing function in a department and have all the

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rights and privileges of permanent status. Term employees encompass the previous categories of term, casual, and departmental and will be used to meet staffing requirements on short-term projects, as well as for other contingencies such as emergency relief, overload, seasonal, and sessional employment of either a full-time or part-time nature. The contract employment will be utilized only where special knowledge or expertise is required which is not available to the Civil Service, where outside objectivity is of a particular importance, and where the employment is of a temporary, non-reoccurring or specialized nature.

I am pleased to advise that the new system for categorizing employees, which has been approved by Cabinet, is consistent with various understandings reached with the Manitoba Government Employees Association, and we will be working closely with the union in the implementation of the new system and placement of effected employees into the appropriate categories.

Another accomplishment, Mr. Chairman, relating directly to the subject of categories of employment, has been the fact that for the first time all categories have been reported by the Civil Service Commission in the annual report. This will hopefully end the perennial confusion and debate over employment statistics in the government service. In past years the annual report included only permanent civil servants and term employees paid on a regular bi-weekly basis. The most recent report for the first time reports all employment, including contract, casual, departmental, seasonal and all other employees paid on a shift for a time-worked basis. The employment figures within the report, which are set out on Pages 21 to 24 represent a snapshot picture of the government's total employment figures as of December 31, 1979.

The figures are consistent with those that our government has released from time to time, and indicate a general reduction of approximately 2,000 employees since we assumed office in October of 1977. While total employment is down by that amount, it is interesting to note that regular, which is permanent employment, is up by approximately 163 employees during 1979. This is reflecting the government's commitment to convert term employees who had been employed by the province for at least 24 months and whose jobs were judged to be required on an ongoing basis. That commitment was made to the Manitoba Government Employees Association last June and over 300 employees, plus an additional 270 positions have been converted from term to regular status.

As a follow-through to our commitment to end the abuse of contract employment, it can be seen that the number of contact employees has dropped dramatically over the past two years to 144 in 1979, compared to 1,019 in 1977. In terms of total employment for the three years compared, the figures reflect 15,353 in 1979, 15,297 in 1978 and 17,238 in 1977. The slight increase in 1979 over 1978 is attributed to departmental, casual, shift and hourly paid employees which are up from 3,334 in 1978 to 3,653 in 1979, as a result of an increase in additional term and shift employees at the provincial's mental health and correctional institutions.

As a result of the improved system for categorizing all employees into three major categories, the reporting of employment statistics will be much simplified and more comprehensive for future annual reports.

Another important initiative undertaken by the Civil Service Commission in the past year, which has been fully endorsed by our government, has been the movement towards a delegation of recruitment and selection authority to departments of government as provided within The Civil Service Act. Delegated staffing authority is being granted only where departments meet specific criteria set by the Civil Service Commission, and is being implemented through a signed, written agreement between the Civil Service Commission and the Deputy Minister of the department concerned. Where delegated authority has been granted it will be subject to a close audit and scrutiny against standards set by the Civil Service Commission. At the present time, delegation has been granted, or agreements are in process of being signed with approximately half a dozen government departments.

It is anticipated that delegation will not only strengthen the role, authority and accountability of departmental personnel managers, but will also greatly assist in reducing the turnaround time of staffing departmental vacancies, thereby achieving greater efficiency and productivity of service.

Other advantages include the establishment of a basis for the audit of personnel practices in departments and an enhancement of the Civil Service

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Commission's responsibility in monitoring and reviewing personnel management in government. An additional benefit will be the provision of a clear, delineation between the role of the Civil Service Commission and the role of the departmental personnel managers. Concurrent with the delegated authority, the Civil Service Commission has implemented an effective means of auditing and monitoring selection procedures within departments to ensure compliance with The Civil Service Act. If for any reason it is perceived that delegation is not working within a particular department, the agreement contains the provision that the authority can be readily cancelled through a request from either party.

The concept of delegation of staffing authority has existed for many years with the federal government and other provincial jurisdictions, and is considered a responsible and progressive step in the development and encouragement of sound, personnel management practices within the Manitoba Civil Service.

In the area of staff relations and collective bargaining, Mr Chairman, I am pleased to report that the government has established what I believe is an extremely effective working relationship with the various bargaining groups within the Civil Service as evidenced by the successful achievement of collective agreements negotiated at the bargaining table for all bargaining groups last year.

In keeping with my government's philosophy of emphasizing consultation and open dialogue as the most effective approach to labour relations, I am pleased to report that we have made extensive and successful use of the joint council as a mechanism of discussing various topics of mutual interest to both the union and the government. We have used this process to successfully implement amendments to The Civil Service Act which had been requested by the association, and in addition, have set up several joint committees or sub-committees of joint counsel to examine certain specific areas of concern, both to the union and to management.

For example, Mr. Chairman, there are currently joint union management committees reviewing such important items as essential services, a review of labour management legislation as it applies to the civil service employees, and a review of the potential impact of technological change, example, the office of the future within the Civil Service.

Other matters which have been successfully discussed or implemented through joint counsel include a leave of absence provision for MGEA presidents, development of an apprenticeship training program, and the creation of the Health and Safety committees in government departments. Emphasis on the constructive use of joint counsel and an open and consultative approach to labour management relations will be continued throughout the coming year.

At the present time, Mr. Chairman, negotiations for the revision of the various collective agreements within the government employees are well under way for the 1980-81 contract year, and we are hopeful that again, satisfactory resolution will be attained at the bargaining table without work stoppages or staff disruption.

Another very important area of activity undertaken during the past year, Mr. Chairman, has involved the confirmation of the government's commitment to equal opportunity, equal employment opportunity within the Manitoba Civil Service. Within the past year I issued a statement to my colleagues in Cabinet confirming our government's commitment to the concept of equal employment opportunity within the Manitoba Civil Service. We must ensure that all segments of society have an equal opportunity to enter the Civil Service on the basis of open competition and to advance according to the relative ability consistent with the basic precepts of the merit principle.

Responsibility for the implementation of government policy in this area rests with the Civil Service Commission, which has been developing a program over the past months designed to facilitate the outreach recruitment of special segments of the population, not proportionately represented within the Manitoba Civil Service. This would include such target groups as women, physically and mentally handicapped, native people, older workers, and economically disadvantaged persons.

Over the past year a number of significant events relative to the implementation of equal employment opportunity occurred within government. An Equal Employment Opportunity Committee comprised of representatives from the Civil Service Commission, the Women's Bureau, along with special resources from outside agencies, sponsored seminars for government personnel managers in the area of employment of women and the employment of the physically handicapped. The seminar on the employment of women was presented in co-operation with the Women's Bureau,

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while the seminar on the employment of the handicapped was organized jointly with Equality Employment, an organization created to promote the employment of physically handicapped people.

The committee has also been in consultation with the federal government and with outside agencies in terms of developing similar initiatives with other target population groups. I'm pleased to announce, Mr. Chairman, that as part of the re-organization of the commission that has taken place over the past year, a specific equal employment opportunity section within the commission has been created and staffed with two professional staff members who will be devoting their full time to working with departments of government in identifying opportunities for special placement. They will also be identifying and establishing contracts with special interest groups and professional organizations which represent or work with target population groups.

Now that the organization of the Commission has been finalized and the Equal Employment Opportunities Section has been staffed, Mr. Chairman we can promise a concentrated and effective effort in achieving the equal employment opportunity goals as established by my government.

Another program area worth mentioning, Mr. Chairman, which was allocated additional staff resources in last year's Estimates, and which is continuing to provide an extremely effective and valuable service to employees and departments of government, is the Employee Health and Counselling Program. The objective of this program is to provide health and counselling assistance to employees who have developed health problems by utilizing every reasonable means to restore them to normal work performance and productivity.

In addition to the health counselling assistance provided to employees, this section provides extensive supervisory training to managers and supervisors throughout government departments in handling health and performance related problems. The program has the full support and co-operation of the Manitoba Government Employees Association, and provides a service of self or supervisory initiated referrals, case consultation and assessment and the arrangement for the appropriate treatment where required. Due to the fact that the number of referrals has been increasing steadily each year it has become increasingly difficult to carry on the training program and still provide adequate counselling assessment. Therefore, the program has been expanded through the provision of additional resources last year. More detailed explanation of the program and the statistics on its caseload and success rate are provided in the annual report which has been submitted. But I'm pleased to report on the high level of success and acceptance that this important program has received.

The final area that I'd like to touch on, Mr. Chairman, is the work being done by the Training and Development Branch of the Civil Service Commission, which offers a wide variety of courses and workshops designed to improve and develop the knowledge and performance of employees in the Civil Service. As the annual report indicates, the branch attracted a record attendance of 4,122 participants during 1979, up from the 1978 level of 3,784. Of particular relevance has been the provision of a number of courses designed to improve the level of management performance and accountability throughout the Civil Service, along with a general emphasis on practical skills development to assist employees in improving their performance in many areas directly related to their daily job requirements.

The provision of training and development opportunities to Civil Service employees is an extremely important function provided by government and I personally fully support the efforts of the Commission in this area.

Complimentary to the initiatives in the area of Management, Training and Development it is worth noting that the Civil Service Commission has developed a proposal which has been approved by Cabinet involving the development of a comprehensive management development plan. The initial phase will involve the development of a performance-based classification and compensation plan for excluded management classifications, which will then be followed through with specific proposals in the areas of manpower planning, performance evaluation, manpower development and training, executive search and executive compensation.

The purpose of the plan is to strengthen management identity and develop an integrated approach to those areas which can contribute to upgrading the level of management skills in government.

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Looking ahead to 1980, Mr. Chairman, areas of emphasis will include the design and implementation of the Personal Audit Program which will strengthen the Commission's ability to review and monitor personnel practices within government service ensuring consistent and equitable application of the provisions of The Civil Service Act, regulations, and policy directives. In addition, the Commission will be developing, as I have indicated, more definite action in the area of equal employment opportunity and will be examining such matters as job restructuring, greater emphasis on educational programs, and the achievement of a higher level of departmental participation.

Throughout 1980 it is anticipated that several additional departments will be delegated recruitment and selection authority and the Commission will be implementing a strong audit function to ensure compliance with the Act and regulations.

Collective bargaining will again comprise a major area of the Commission's activity during 1980, in that all Civil Service agreements are scheduled for renewal effective March 31st, 1980.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, the Commission intends to continue emphasis in the area of management, development and upgrading and it is hopeful that the major components of an integrated management development plan will be in place by the end of the year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would the Honourable Minister invite his staff in now if he cares to.

Before I acknowledge the next speaker I would just announce that we don't have a Minister's Salary under this Department and therefore I will be allowing a pretty wide-ranging debate under this Item. So anything that comes under Civil Service Commission will be allowed to be debated under this Item.

The Honourable Minister.

MR. MacMASTER: If the members would like I would follow the same routine I followed with the Department of Labour and Manpower and give you a breakdown on personnel, if that is what you would like.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Agreed?

MR. MacMASTER: You don't want that?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Logan.

MR. WILLIAM JENKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the Minister's offer, but I wanted to make a few remarks before the Minister, and I agree with you, Mr. Chairman, that the main part of our critique of this Department will be taking place, as you state, under Salaries. I realize that Other Expenditures in the Civil Service, especially Item No. 2. are mainly statutory and we may have some questions on that.

Before I proceed, Mr. Chairman, I want to draw to the House's attention that when you first became Chairman of this Committee, or appointed, you asked me for some information on the position of being Chairman. I want to assure the House that I didn't give you the information that you used last night of speaking to the Assembly from the Chair. However, that is just something I wanted to. . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Remember I can acknowledge that, but I won't make any comments.

MR. JENKINS: I want to thank the Minister for the introduction that he has given us and I would say that it was an extensive introduction that he has made to this department and fortunately in the time allotted to me I won't have that much time to make a reply.

I note from what the Minister has said that there has been considerable changes within the Civil Service Commission, mainly the changing of categories from 5 to 3 and someone said that was a good decision. Well, time will tell and primarily I might state at this time that as far as my discussion of this department, I will be dealing mainly with the Minister's Annual Report, because I think that is in the main where we will be making our remarks.

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The Minister has said that he will give us a breakdown and I hope that when we next meet tomorrow that the Minister will have that and if we could have that in a table form, if that is not asking too much of the Minister and his staff, we would appreciate that very much.

The Minister spoke much about the delegation of the recruitment authority to various departments and I might say that it is making me wonder, Mr. Chairman, if this is the trend that we are working toward, just what the function of the Civil Service Commission will be. Are we to gather from that, as the Minister has stated on Page 7, "A function of the Civil Service Commission is to act as an appeal body with respect to appeals on position re-classification initiated by employees on all appealable matters emanating from employees not covered by the provisions of the collective agreement." Since the hiring authority will, if I understand the Minister correctly from the remarks that he made this afternoon, there is a working towards the delegation of the hiring authority and just what function then is the Civil Service Commission role in recruitment and selection of employees for the Civil Service? This is one of the things that when the present government took office that they accused this government of, of bypassing the Civil Service Commission, that recruitment was taking place elsewhere, maybe under various categories, but now we are going to find that recruitment and selection of permanent, not the term or contract employees, are going to become in some cases maybe the sole function of the various departments involved. And I see a lessening of the authority, of the function and role of the Civil Service Commission, if this is the goal and aim to which the present government and the present Minister is working. We will deal with that, Mr. Chairman, in fair length when we get to that portion of the Minister's report.

The Minister also stated that they were very happy with the contract negotiations that are taking place currently between the government on one hand and the Manitoba Government Employees Association on the other. I just wonder if the Minister happened to read today's newspaper and I won't elaborate on it at this time, because I don't have the time.

--(Interjection)-- Well, if my reading of the news report is wrong, then I will stand to be corrected, but I understand from what was stated in today's newspaper, all is not as rosey as the Minister would like us to believe it is. Or was it radio? --(Interjection)-- Mr. Dewar has made a statement that contract negotiations are dragging out and I will make it my business to find out exactly what that statement was.

The Minister also said that this department is looking into essential services and how it . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hour is 4:30. Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

The Chairman reported upon the Committees' deliberations to Mr. Speaker and requested leave to sit again.

IN SESSION

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Radisson.

MR. KOVNATS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Springfield, that the report of the Committee be received.

MOTION presented and carried.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Government House Leader.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Speaker, by agreement I would move, seconded by the Honourable Minister without Portfolio, that this House do not adjourn.

MOTION presented and carried and the House accordingly adjourned until 2:30 tomorrow afternoon (Thursday).