



FOURTH SESSION — THIRTIETH LEGISLATURE
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

26 Elizabeth II

Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Peter Fox
Speaker



Vol. XXIV No. 17B

2:30 p.m., Friday, March 11, 1977

TIME: 2:30 p.m.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY
ESTIMATES - EDUCATION

MR. CHAIRMAN, Mr. William Jenkins(Logan): This afternoon I'd like to draw the attention of the honourable members to the gallery where we have 22 students, Grade 8 standing, of the Viscount Alexander School under the direction of Mr. Craig and Mrs. Wiens. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Fort Garry.

We also have 30 students, Grade 9 standing of the Oak Park School under the direction of Miss Hoffman. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Charleswood.

We also have 50 students of Grade 5 standing of the Marion School under the direction of Mrs. Buccini. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Minister of Health and Social Development; the constituency of St. Boniface.

On behalf of all the honourable members I bid you welcome here this afternoon. Oh, just a moment, I have one more. I'm sorry.

We also have 75 students of Grade 11 standing under the direction of Mrs. Braid from the Red River Community College. This school is located in my own constituency, the constituency of Logan.

On behalf of the honourable members I bid you welcome here this afternoon.

When we broke at the noon hour recess we were on Resolution No. 50(a) on page 20 of your Estimates book. Resolution 50(a). The Honourable Member for St. James.

MR. MINAKER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Before we left for lunch the Honourable Minister gave us some information that my honourable colleague from Brandon West had requested and we thank the Minister for that information.

I would like to, Mr. Chairman, advise the Honourable Minister . . . first-off I'd like to thank him for the review of the Progressive Conservative philosophy on government involvement in business. I want to make it very clear to the Honourable Minister that what I said was, that the government should get out of business. I did not say that the government should get out of utilities or institutions. I won't elaborate any further on that portion of the debate.

I would like to advise the Honourable Minister that in the St. James-Assiniboia School Division, which my constituency is part of, that our mill rate last year for special levies was not 51 mills but actually 58 ½ mills. And what I was trying to make clear, hopefully, to the Honourable Minister was that with the amounts of money that he has been able to get for his department for education this year, that that special levy mill rate will increase to something like 65 mills — 64 ½ mills — when we look at that six-mill increase that we're looking at in St. James-Assiniboia. And I would suggest to the Honourable Minister, with that 64 mill for special levy, what does that mean to that taxpayer or homeowner that has that \$5,000 assessed home which is not very big, and he realizes that.

Well I suggest to you, Mr. Chairman, that that is a \$320 tax bill for education alone. And, Mr. Chairman, I would suggest to the Honourable Minister of Education that if he tries to claim all of that \$350 tax rebate for education, that the government is in trouble in St. James constituency because we have been told that part of that tax rebate is also for municipal taxes and in the last four years in St. James constituency the municipal taxes have more than doubled because of Unicity. So being practical on this particular item, Mr. Chairman, I would suggest that if the Minister is being fair, that 50 percent of that property tax rebate belongs to his department. If that being the case, then the \$175 that the tax rebate covers for education still leaves close to \$150 for that taxpayer who has that \$5,000 assessed home. And I might suggest to the Honourable Minister, Mr. Chairman, that the majority of many of the homeowners in that category are senior citizens. And if this government does not recognize that senior citizens have paid their share of taxes for education so that regardless of what he says about the increase in tax rebates or whatever, the fact of the matter is in the St. James constituency which I represent, they are looking at a 6 mill increase for education taxes. They are looking at a special levy which will be 64 mills, and they are looking at a tax for education in our area of some \$320 for a \$5,000 home. They're looking at a \$640 tax for education if they happen to be in a home that is assessed at \$10,000. And I might add, Mr. Chairman, that there aren't too many homes in our constituency, to my knowledge, that are in that category, but it at least gives the Honourable Minister the realistic picture of what is happening in the education-financing field.

And I would suggest, Mr. Chairman, that the Minister try and take 100 percent of that tax rebate system for education in St. James as a gross error; a gross error because the people in St. James realize what the cost of unicity has meant to them. Some \$9.4 million in money that was in St. James' coffers was taken. But not only that, something like 230 percent increase in municipal taxes and over double increase in education taxes. Now, Mr. Chairman, this Minister is trying to claim all of the tax rebate for his department. I would suggest that that is incorrect and he recognizes the fact that it is incorrect and, further, recognizes that a \$5,000 assessed home in our area will be looking at a \$320

tax bill for education alone this year. So I would suggest, Mr. Chairman, that the Honourable Minister review his comments and realize the situation in our area.

MR. TURNBULL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am indeed pleased that the Member for St. James wishes to argue this point about the property tax credit plan and, particularly, that he wishes to argue it in relationship to senior citizens. That property tax credit plan was introduced for the purpose of bringing about greater equitability in the property tax scheme in this province.

Property tax is basically an unfair tax. If you have someone who is making, say, \$8,000 a year living next door to someone who is making \$50,000 a year, and the houses are assessed the same, they pay the same property tax. And I don't think that's fair. I think a person who makes \$8,000 should get a fair break on his property taxes, that's why we have the property tax credit plan. It reduces the taxes that homeowners have to pay. It particularly reduces the taxes that retired people have to pay. That's why it's there, that's why it's going to be continued.

Now I know that the members of the Conservative Party, through their leader of last year — they keep changing leaders, but their leader of last year in the House said that they would eliminate that property tax credit plan. And the leader, from his seat, is apparently interjecting and disrupting the proceedings of the House, their leader of this year in the House, is saying that in fact they will eliminate the property tax credit plan.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order. The Leader of the Opposition have a point of order?

MR. LYON: Would my honourable friend permit a question, Mr. Chairman.

MR. TURNBULL: Mr. Chairman, I will be delighted to entertain all the questions the Member for Souris-Killarney has. I would be delighted to inform and answer his questions when I am finished.

The point that needs to be made though, and reiterate is that the Conservative Party would want to return to a less fair tax system. They have made that announcement. It was reported in the newspaper. Now it may be that for political expediency they want to change their mind on that too. You know they fought it for years about medical care premiums. They now say, "Oh that's a good program." They fought it for years about the Pharmacare program and now they say, "Oh well that's a good program too. Oh we'll keep that." They fought it for years about Autopac. Now they say, "Oh well that's a good program. We'll keep that, we won't change it." You know it's sort of a "me-too" party that they have over there. And that's fine. If that kind of cynicism is what they want to put before the people of Manitoba that's their business.

My concern, Mr. Chairman, as the Minister responsible for the Department of Education is to ensure that the financial support that is provided by our department, by the provincial government to education enables an educational program to be developed which is meaningful for the children in the schools. That is the main thrust of the department, to ensure that there is financial support provided to the schools that will enable those schools in the city, in the suburbs, in the urban areas outside of Winnipeg and in the rural and northern areas to provide an education and meet the needs of the children in those areas. That's the purpose of the Department of Education and I believe that every child, that every young person in our school system should have the opportunity of taking not only the basic courses that are required but those optional courses that that student might find of particular interest. Now it's obvious that the basic courses are those that I've spelled out in this Legislature before in this session. They are language arts and mathematics and science; those courses are required. I believe they are being well taught in our schools across the province. And I believe that the children, the young people in the school system are benefiting from those courses. Those courses will enable those children, those young people when they graduate to obtain decent employment with good pay. That educational system and those basics might even enable those children to become legislators in this House, right here. And I think that that would be extremely desirable to have those young people in this Legislature.

But there is also of course the optional courses that are provided either through the department or through the local option of the school divisions. And those optional courses, I believe, provide a degree of enrichment for students in our school system. Those optional courses are such as I mentioned to the Member for Roblin earlier today, courses in music, courses in music through the elementary, through the middle years and through the senior years. There are optional courses in arts and I think that they are important.

I believe, Sir, that the schools in this province should have the support provided by the Provincial Government which will enable the schools to have gymnasiums in which physical education and physical fitness programs can be taught, programs that will enable young people to not only attain a degree of physical fitness but to attain as well the life-skills that are necessary for them to continue to maintain a high level of physical fitness once they graduate. I think that is important. I believe that there should be financial support which will enable not only the children and young people to attain physical fitness in school but to equip them with the abilities to participate in competitive sports in the school and in their community clubs because I believe that is important too, not only for their physical well-being but for their well-being in becoming competitive and learning how to cope with pressure and competition from other teams.

So although the Member for St. James wishes to argue about whether the mill rate is this or that or the other and although that is an important issue I believe that the program that I have before the House lessens the increase in the mill rate to the property tax payer. The argument he wants to put forward is one of degree rather than of kind. The program lessens the rate of increase in the mill rate. That's one of the things it's designed to do in addition to giving the schools sufficient money to enable them to deliver the programs that the children and young people need and want in our schools and the programs that the parents desire those children to have.

Mr. Chairman, it was mentioned earlier today that I was paying attention to my own press releases and I must confess that one of the reasons I am enjoying my Estimates Debate and the attention that members opposite are giving me is that there is a great deal of coverage about education in the newspapers and on the radio these days and the longer we spend on education the more such coverage there will be, the more debate there will be. However, he did say I was reading my own press releases and I at that time indicated to him that it wasn't my press releases that I was reading, it was the press releases of other organizations. Other organizations believe that this particular program of grant support introduced by me and the Provincial Government does give the schools the means by which they can provide adequate programs for the young people in their schools.

So I want to read a press release from McMaster House, the Teachers' Society headquarters. It begins, "Teachers welcome change in pupil-teacher ratio. Art Reimer, President of the Manitoba Teachers' Society says he welcomes the announcement by Education Minister, Ian Turnbull, that reduces the pupil-teacher ratio for elementary education. Mr. Reimer said the change recognizes the significance of elementary education in Manitoba. The idea inherent in the former grant structure that elementary education was somehow less important has been removed, said Mr. Reimer.

"The announcement provides a standard ratio of 23 to 1 for all grades. It is used for determining the number of teacher grants paid by the province to school divisions. Up to now the ratios have been 28 students to one teacher from kindergarten to Grade 8 and 23 to 1 for Grades 9 to 12. Mr. Reimer said, that although the ratio had been adjusted it did not necessarily mean additional teaching jobs or smaller classrooms for the many elementary teachers who now have classes of 30 students or more. He said, 'I hope school trustees will focus their attention on elementary education and use the additional grants to ensure that no programs are cut in the face of rising costs and where possible improve the actual teaching situation in the classroom.'

All school divisions in Manitoba find it necessary to provide more teachers than there are grants paid for by the province. Of a total \$23 million increase in grants to school divisions announced by Mr. Turnbull, Mr. Reimer said, he particularly welcomed improvements in equalization grants. He said the grants have been improved to better recognize financial differences among school divisions and were consistent with the policy of the Manitoba Teachers' Society. Mr. Reimer said more financial assistance is still needed but he recognized the restraint placed on spending by the Provincial Government."

And a great deal of the restraint placed on the Provincial Government on spending comes from the individuals sitting opposite because as our budget rises to pay for education and other needed social programs the members of the Conservative Party criticize those increases in budget and be that as it may, Mr. Chairman, but let's face it if they want more money, as the Member for St. James is suggesting, then they should knock off criticizing the increase in the Budget of the Province of Manitoba. You can't have it both ways and you certainly are trying to have it both ways today.

I want to read also the release that was put out by the Manitoba Association of School Trustees.

"Trustees Encouraged By Government Support," it is headed. "In reaction to the government's announcement of additional grants for school boards, the Manitoba Association of School Trustees' President, Ken Burgess, responded: 'We are indeed encouraged by this increased level of support and the fact that the government has recognized and responded to the serious financial bind in which local school divisions find themselves. The injection of an additional \$23 million into school board revenues for 1977 will go a long way to assist education and to ease the burden of the local taxpayer. Trustees had earlier indicated a concern when the provincial estimates were first tabled in the House. From those printed estimates, it appeared that school boards would receive only an additional \$7 million. The Minister's statement this morning clarifies that school boards will receive \$23 million additional revenue. All school boards in the province will gain from these improved grants and they will particularly welcome those increases in the per-pupil grant, equalization grant, vocational-industrial grant, and the increase in the number of authorized teachers for grant purposes by reason of reducing the enrolment formula. The improved equalization grant formula will be a especially beneficial to those hard-pressed divisions that have limited local resources. School boards who have vocational-industrial students will also be pleased with the increased grant in this area. The government through this action has recognized the importance of these programs and appears to have acted on the recommendations of the Regional Secondary Schools Task Force which reported to the government last fall'."

Mr. Chairman, I indicated to members opposite that I do not read, after their publication, my own

press, but I certainly do have brought to my attention the releases made by other organization. The first release I read from The Teachers' Society is after all a boards earlier, in January actually of this year, to try to use, to adapt I think was the word, to adapt the Anti-Inflation Board guidelines figure of six percent to their own budgeting. And I think many boards have tried to do that. I have had letters back from them that have said in effect that they feel the suggestion made sense, they would try to comply, and they indicated what was obvious at the time, that expenditures were rising for them and they indeed might not meet the six percent limit. But if you look at the Anti-Inflation Board guidelines, you know that it is not a straight six percent. Indeed there are variations in it and I did suggest that the program has a target and I suggested that it was adaptable.

Now we can argue forever about whether or not we have enough money. We can argue forever about whether the amount of money is distributed in a way to assist divisions the most. I believe that this program brings about a greater degree of fiscal equity in the province. I have not only my own press to read about that, I have releases from the Manitoba Association of School Trustees and the Manitoba Teachers' Society which said the same thing. Now I don't see, Mr. Speaker, why we need to try to pick holes in this program. It is a program that provides money to school divisions to carry on the job that they have to do, which is to educate our young people, to educate young men and women in the schools. And I think that they are receiving a useful education. I think that they do have the release made by an executive who represents some 12,300 teachers. They seem to be encouraged by the grant program that I have before the House for its consideration and I hope, approval by everybody concerned and not just by my own side here. This release was given to me as a result of remarks made in the House earlier today about my reading my own press, given to me because the members who put it out wanted to make sure that I understood that they supported this program.

Mr. Chairman, there are, as I've said before, a number of very serious considerations in education. We have tried to deal with them during this debate. We have many more items to cover. I detailed for members earlier today all of the items that were in the foundation program and were in the other grant sections of our provincial support for education in Manitoba. Perhaps we could get to a discussion of that detail because I think that it is vitally important that we get these estimates approved. I think we have spent some time discussing the principles involved. I do not see much point in the kind of argument that the Member for St. James is putting forward. One can go through choosing one division or another and try to estimate the amount of increased money that is available for them. The program does lessen the impact on local mill rates, impact that would occur as a result of rising school expenditures, expenditures that rise for all kinds of reasons. I had asked the opportunity to get out of the school and get involved in various projects through their local communities. They have the opportunity to be involved in mock parliaments. They have the opportunity of getting involved in various physical fitness programs and they have the opportunity of learning both those academic and technical skills that will enable them to take their place in society as adults. So I think that the program as proposed is one that deserves support of all members opposite, including the Member for St. James.

MR. MINAKER: I thank the Honourable Minister for his comments. Unfortunately, Mr. Chairman, I don't know whether the Honourable Minister is on such a high pinnacle that what I have been saying is shooting under his feet because I'm sure he is so high up on his pinnacle it's not shooting over his head. What I criticized him on was not the amount in terms of dollars but the priority that this government has chosen in the past few years and this year on where they are going to spend their money. —(Interjections)— That's what I was criticizing the Minister on, not on the amount of the \$23 million. I was pointing out to the Honourable Minister that the actual cost increase for education this year will be \$40 million and if we want to talk on a broad basis, not just in St. James-Assiniboia but in the province, if one mill will raise \$2.6 million in the province, to try and make up that \$17 million that that government is short just for the increase this year, you are looking at six mills on each division. That is what I'm trying to tell the Minister, Mr. Chairman, that six mills is what we're looking at in every division on an average. We're not criticizing him on \$23 million; we say it should be at least \$40 million. If they decided that they would get out of the business of trying to fund things like Saunders, trying to spend \$4 million on hotels, let's look at the whole situation. Is education more important than airplanes that you sell to somebody down in the South American countries that won't even pay for them because you think you have the ability as a Socialistic government to run business?

This is what we are talking about, Mr. Chairman, but this Minister does not understand that. That's what he cannot understand. And then he gets up on that pinnacle and starts talking to the students who are up here in the galleries. We know what these programs are in the schools. We know what they are. He has told us. He has told us that for the last week-and-a-half. We are talking about grants but this Minister is so high on that pinnacle that he says, "My God, we've got 200 students here today, we've got to stand up and talk about it." We're talking about grants, Mr. Minister, right now. We are not talking about programs but this Minister doesn't understand that, Mr. Chairman. I would suggest that when the Honourable Minister talks about teacher-pupil ratios, naturally the Teachers' Association, naturally the School Board Trustees Association are going to encourage increased ratios because

Friday, March 11, 1977

right now, even with this increased grant that the Minister is talking about, if I understood him correctly, he said that with the new grants system we are elevating our quality of education in the province, it will mean that we are going to recognize 280 more teachers. That is what he said if I understood him correctly. Is that right, Mr. Minister? You said, I believe, in your announcement that 280 more teachers would be qualified. —(Interjection)— No, I read it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Order. The Honourable Member for St. James.

MR. MINAKER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I understand his comments on the day that he announced the different grant's increases he said that 280 more teachers would be qualified or recognized in the foundation levy. Well, Mr. Chairman, I would suggest that last year if I understand correctly, the authorized grant covered something like about 9,500 teachers — maybe a little more — 9,558 if we want to be exact. So if we add the 280 teachers to that all of a sudden we're looking at 9,800 and so many teachers that are now recognized by this government as being required for our education system in Manitoba. But lo and behold, still under special levy the population of teachers in our province are about 11,500, so we're still talking about 14 percent of our teaching staff that special levies have to pick up. This government does not recognize that the school divisions, the people of Manitoba think that in order to deliver the services he talked about so admirably a few minutes ago about providing the services, that the people who are operating this at the local level say: "We need 11,500 teachers." But this government says: "We only recognize 9,800 or so." So there's still 14 percent of the teachers that are being paid by the taxpayers — there's only one taxpayer, I agreed with the Minister on those comments — but there's still 14 percent that are being picked up by special levy along with these additional costs. The whole crux of the whole situation is that \$23 million increased grants to our school system this year, which represents about 56 percent of the anticipated increase, where does it go? I told the Minister this morning and I don't think he recognized it, that about six and a half million of that will go to pay for heat and light in the schools. But the irony of the whole situation is, that 70 percent of that is going to go to hydro bills because this government fooled around with hydro politically and wasted the money and the millions of dollars. This is where it's starting to come home to the taxpayer, that all of a sudden the taxes on school education are going up, but why? Because the hydro bills in the schools are going up. —(Interjection)— Well, they laugh at it, but that's a fact.

In our school division alone over half a million dollars increase for heat and light and 70 percent of that are hydro bills, and this is what we're into a situation on, Mr. Chairman. This government doesn't realize it and it pats itself on the back because they've offered \$23 million for operation of schools — 56 percent of the tax increase — and no wonder, Mr. Chairman, this Minister wants to get off this subject. No wonder he wants to go on to something else. No wonder he wants to go on to it, Mr. Chairman.

I suggest, Mr. Chairman, that the facts be known now because we're starting to bring them out. Just where is the money being spent by our school divisions and why it's being spent; and this government cannot recognize that. Unfortunately for the education system in our province, the worst part is, this Minister does not understand that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Minister of Education.

MR. TURNBULL: Mr. Chairman, I have heard the members opposite make some pretty screwy connections between one program and another' but never one that was less attached — one to the other — than the connection that the Member for St. James just attempted to make.

In 1968 I got involved in politics. In 1969, a year later, I got elected; and one of the reasons I ran was because it was pretty obvious that the Conservative Government at that time didn't know what it was doing. It was pretty obvious at that time that they had signed — if you want to get into this I'll get into it — I listened to you, you listen to me. If you want a debate of this kind we'll have it. Okay, if you don't want to talk about education programs . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. One at a time, please. The Honourable Minister of Education.

MR. TURNBULL: If you don't want to talk about education programs which is what you said, if you don't want to talk about that, if you do not want as I said to get into the details of all the programs that are included in this grants' package, programs such as salaries for teachers; programs such as transportation of pupils; programs such as for library materials and films; programs such as for vocational education; programs for small schools; programs for school nutrition; programs for northern cost of living; programs for tuition fees for our northern people. If you don't want to discuss that program, that's fine.

Let us discuss the expenditure of money, the reason I got into politics and the reason you're there and I'm here. Let's talk about who understands hydro. If that, Mr. Chairman, is what you have allowed over there I assume you will allow me to continue the debate in this vein.

In 1969 there were a series of hearings around this province which friends of mine attended that used to work with me at the University of Manitoba when I was then a research associate at the university.

My particular area of study at that time for the university was in the administration of water resources in Canada. I had particular concern then with what the then Conservative Government was doing with regard to the high level diversion of South Indian Lake. And what became very apparent through a series of public meetings through the urban area of Winnipeg, what became very apparent was that the Conservative Government just simply did not know what it was doing. When the Minister responsible at that time, the Member for Lakeside, appeared at one of those public meetings which I was not at but which friends of mine were, he was asked to make some comment to the public meeting of 200 or 300 people about what the Conservative Government intend to do with hydro development in South Indian Lake. He said not a word. Now there is misunderstanding.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition state his Point of Order.

MR. LYON: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I have no objection whatsoever to my honourable friend talking about hydro. I'd love to talk about hydro, and Mr. Chairman, if you're going to permit him to talk about hydro I reserve the right, right now, to make a speech on hydro, right now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Order please. The Honourable Acting House Leader.

MR. PAULLEY: The Point of Order, I didn't hear everything that went on. But I would suggest, Mr. Chairman, on the Point of Order, the verbiage used by the Leader of the Opposition directed toward you by way of threats, I would suggest was most improper for normal members of the Legislature. Possibly it was typical of the Leader of the Opposition, but I suggest, Mr. Chairman, that you take due cognizance of what the Honourable, the Leader of the Opposition said in respect of your conduct of this meeting.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Order please. There's not an order on a Point of Order. The Chair is going to make a decision. Order please. Order please. You have already spoken to the Point of Order. Order please. You are not speaking again. I'm asking the honourable member to sit down. Order please. The Chair does not entertain to be threatened by any member of this Chamber. Order.

Now the matter of hydro was dragged into this debate and I'm going to be very strict, we're going to speak on grants. It was dragged into this debate by the Honourable Member for St. James, not by the Honourable Minister of Education. Order. Do you have a Point of Order? The Honourable Member for St. James on a Point of Privilege.

MR. MINAKER: I would like to point out to Mr. Chairman that I said in this debate — I didn't drag it into the debate — I said in this debate the increase in St. James-Assiniboia is \$600,000 in our budget this year; 70 percent of it was due to hydro increases. Now if that's dragging it into the debate I dragged it into the debate.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There is no more Points of Order before this House and there is no matter of personal privilege. I would refer the honourable member to our House Rules and read what personal privilege is. We will now get back on Resolution 50(a) and I intend to . . . Order please. I do not rule in this House with an iron hand, I can assure the Honourable Member from Fort Garry that if he has a Point of Order, any member in this House has a Point of Order, but I would suggest that you are going to have a nice long weekend, take your Rule Book home with you, you've all got a copy of the Rules, read them. And especially I will read to you the section that pertains to what we are dealing with now, perhaps a little jogging of your memory won't hurt. ORDER.

Rule 64, sub section (2). Speeches in the Committee of the Whole House must be strictly relevant to the item or clause under discussion.

Now I've tried to give members a bit of leeway in this House, but you are going to seemingly abuse the privilege that I have tried to extend to you, then you are going to have to live by the Rules of the House. These are your rules, you want them changed, change them. We have a Rules Committee, go there, make your changes there, recommend them to the House, but in the meantime, as your Chairman, these are your rules, I'm trying to enforce them. If you don't like them, change them, but you are not going to change them here. The Honourable Minister of Education.

MR. TURNBULL: Mr. Chairman, I thank you for your reminder to all members of the House that we are on my Estimates, we are on the grants package of \$23 million in support of public education in the school. I did not ask for, I did not introduce nor do I intend now after your admonitions to proceed with that screwy connection between hydro development in Northern Manitoba and the cost of education. But I will take an opportunity later in the session, Sir, to debate these matters.

The program that we have before us of \$23 million to support public schools in our province is one that I did ask the Member for St. James to debate with me. I asked him to debate the programs outlined here, indeed I read off a few of them and I ask him now if he can manage to control himself, to get back to the debate on this grants package. It is one, the details of which I did read to members opposite last night. I want to emphasize one of the programs, Sir, and that is the one with regard to parent advisory committees or councils. I have put aside in the Estimates, \$180,000 to enable the department through the local school divisions to encourage parents to be in better communication with the schools and the teachers there. I hope that this program will lead to a positive and constructive development of programs in the school that are in the nature of local options and will

also encourage the parents to come to an understanding of the problems faced by teachers and, of course, vice-versa. It is a particular part of my budget of this year that I would like to see discussed and approved by members opposite, indeed, I would like to see the whole \$23 million approved so that we can get on with the business of operating the schools of the Province of Manitoba and if you will, Sir, we could have debate on the various items making up the \$23 million.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Assiniboia.

MR. PATRICK: Mr. Chairman, just a few points that I would like to ask the Minister at this time. I know we had considerable debate with respect to the tax credit plan and the good points about it, the benefits and perhaps the not-so-good points about it but as far as I'm concerned, until such time as the government can bring in a different system or change, we have perhaps no course but to accept the property tax credit plan. I don't say that it's a cure for everything but if there is nothing better to replace it and as long as the Foundation Program is not paying for at least 80 percent of the total cost of education, then we have no choice but to accept the tax credit plan and in some respects, it is working quite well for some people in the low income group. It's working quite well perhaps for the senior citizens where they get a tax benefit of \$300 which perhaps reduces their education tax by we'll say 50 percent or in some cases total education tax could be removed by the tax credit plan. However, my concern is that in some areas there has been a great escalation in property tax. In my own area and all I can do is use my own home, I don't know if the Minister is aware, where my tax used to be \$600 and some — \$640 or \$650 about only five and some years ago, five and a half years ago — and last year it was around \$1800 and I'm afraid this year it'll probably be a little over \$2,000 and about 60 percent of that — it's a small home, it's not what you'd call a big home, it's a two storey, ordinary home so the Member for St. James when he pointed out and perhaps maybe he's right to the extent that St. James-Assiniboia did lose a lot when we came into Unicity but that's a debate that's in the past and I'm not going to bring that up. When we look back and say, "Well our tax used to be \$600 five years ago and now it's \$1800" naturally you have to start looking for answers and say what is the causes, how much is the education cost and one has to be concerned and I am sure that many property owners and home owners are concerned that the tax has been going up. On the other hand I could say, "Well I have five or six children in school and if the property tax is \$900 for my six children and if then you relate it to cost benefit for each one and you say, "Well, it's not so high." So we can, you know, take a look at both sides but in respect to the property tax in this province as compared to some other city, let's take Calgary or Edmonton, there is a great difference, or even in Saskatchewan because I've had some comparisons made. In fact my brother-in-law in Edmonton has a home that's much larger than mine and he is paying a third, a third of the property tax that we're paying here.

Again I know the Minister can indicate to me that this is because Alberta is oil rich and a real wealthy province and we haven't got the resources that they have. This may be correct and I don't disagree with that but maybe it's time that we made a complete comprehensive study of educational financing. I know the Minister indicated that at the present time there is no way we can get the Federal Government to participate in some cost sharing. I know they are cost sharing in some programs, educational programs, special projects and so on. So there is some sharing now but they are not prepared at the present time to financing. But maybe it would be time to have some kind of a review made, and to see whether the property tax credit scheme is a very progressive method, or is it as progressive as the income tax method and to have the whole thing analyzed.

My question to the Minister would be at this time, I know he indicated in the House here that total support for 1977 is up by \$23 million over 1976 and that out of this whole total only \$12.6 million will be to increase the share of the Foundation Program; only \$12 million. — (Interjection) — That's right. So my concern is that may not even keep up with the increase in salaries and costs of the schools. Now my question to the Minister would be: What part of the education costs is the Foundation Program now supporting? What percentage is the Foundation Program supporting the education costs? Because I know last year the Manitoba Association of School Trustees, in their brief to the government, in the brief I guess to all parties, indicated that only somewhere in the neighborhood of 55 or 54 percent of the Foundation Program has slipped down from 80 percent to a little over 50, and that was only last year. So my question to the Minister is \$23 million is lots of money but \$12,000 is going only towards the Foundation Grant, so I would like to know . . . \$12.6 somebody says . . . so can the Minister tell the House — education financing is a very complicated thing and to many people they don't understand the tax credit plan, they don't understand the costs. I think everybody or most people in Manitoba understood the Foundation Program or what it was supposed to do, the Foundation Program was supposed to cover a certain percentage of education costs. With this support this year can the Minister indicate to us if the Foundation Program is paying 75 percent of the total education costs or is it paying 80 percent or is it paying 60 percent? Because from all the information we had last year it was down to somewhere a little over 50 percent.

I don't know if the Trustee's brief was accurate or not but it was presented to the government so I'm sure that the Minister is familiar with it. I'm sure that many people are concerned. In my situation and probably many people they can afford to pay even through the property tax but I think it's

unfortunate that more and more of education cost is coming from the property tax, if the Foundation Program really has slipped down to some 50-some percent as it was indicated last year. If that is the case then I think there is inequities in the property tax system because if we used a property tax system then it certainly affects different school divisions. Some school divisions have a low assessment and some have a higher assessment, so in a lower assessment the dependence comes on the property tax payer and he has to pay that much more in a very moderate division, while in a division that's got more money they have to pay less but they can afford to pay more.

So when the program is designed so that too much money is coming from the property tax itself then I think that there will be inequities and those inequities will get greater and perhaps will be worse. All I know is that we were told by the Trustees, by the teachers themselves last year, that a little over 50 percent now is only paid from the foundation program and the rest is through the property tax. Well I say the Minister will have problems surely with his grants that he came up with this year. And as a question to him, I'd like to know where the money will be coming from. But the point is that even with the \$12.6 million will it keep up with the salaries of the teachers, will it keep up with cost of the schools, the heating and everything else. What will it do as far as the foundation program? So I hope that the Minister perhaps will give us some answers in this area. I know that too many people — the tax credit plan — it's quite a popular thing at least for the government. . . . As I say, I'm for the tax property credit plan until such time as the government comes up with something better. I wouldn't want to say, let's do away with that. But I just wonder is it the answer as far as educational financing or is it time for the Minister to take a look at the whole educational financing and say is the present tax credit plan, the foundation program, the per pupil grants with a sort of a mish-mash of all kinds of formulas that he has, is that the answer. Or is there maybe a better progressive measure or is the tax credit plan a progressive type of financial program. I'm not against the tax credit plan, as I say to the Minister, because I know for many senior citizens it will pay at least 50 and in many cases take off the total education cost of a small home for senior citizens — (Interjection) — Somebody says 80 percent, be it as it may, or be it as it is, Mr. Chairman, I still feel that it's time that the Minister starts looking over all the whole financing of the education system.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Birtle-Russell.

MR. GRAHAM: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. You know, it's somewhat ironical to hear the Member for Assiniboia because really he stands up here and he does say that he is all for the government Property Tax Credit Plan. He doesn't know the answers but probably he will follow whatever the government is suggesting. Mr. Chairman, I have to say that as far as I personally am concerned, I don't see the Property Tax Credit Plan as doing the job that the government has said it will do.

Mr. Chairman, we have heard the Minister and the Minister has been very vocal on this issue. He has said that the Property Tax Credit Plan will in effect distribute income equally; it will remove the disparities in the taxing program and even out the cost of education. Now, if he believes that, then I have to say that he is even less informed than I would give him the credit for.

I think the Minister has to take a little direction from his own party even. We have heard him stand up in here and espouse the philosophies of the Conservative Party. He's done it in the House — at least what he believes to be the Conservative position — and I know that he is absolutely wrong in every case where he has attempted to espouse the Conservative policy; he can't understand it; he's absolutely wrong. He can't even understand the policy of his own party because he fails to implement the recommendations of his own party.

And I would like to refer the Minister to the policy position of the NDP as outlined in the Guidelines for the Seventies. He can walk away if he wants to, it shows the arrogance of the Minister. He doesn't want to listen. He doesn't even want to listen to the words of wisdom of his own party. I would refer him to Volume 1 of the Guidelines for the Seventies which came out approximately four years ago, and I would like to quote. It says, "In committing itself to improving the quality of the human condition in Manitoba, the government will take further steps to restructure the system of taxation according to the ability-to-pay principle."

Now, Mr. Speaker, that sounds like a very fine and noble principle. And if the government wants to live up to that I have no quarrel with them, but they refuse to do so.

Further on in Volume 2 of the Guidelines, they also recognize that. "There are great inequalities in the present tax system. The Farm Property Tax is highly regressive. In addition to bearing the burden of property tax on farms, farmers face a rate of tax that is proportionately much higher than on other forms of production even though farm residence are not taxed and property taxes paid are deductible for income tax purposes."

Now these are the recommendations of the NDP party in their Guidelines, and they have done absolutely nothing, Sir, absolutely nothing to remove the inequities that exist in the property taxes, and this education tax portion of that that exists on farm property. I would suggest that it is quite conceivable, Mr. Chairman, that a person, probably living in the Minister's own constituency who has

an income of say \$12,000, and depending on the type of house he lives in, he could quite conceivably pay no education tax, through the Property Tax Credit Plan. But a farmer in my constituency could pay \$1,200 or more in education tax with an income of \$12,000 or less, or he may even be in the negative income position in that particular year. So when you talk about ability-to-pay and the equalization you are doing nothing to remove the inequities that exist.

There is another thing too, Mr. Speaker, and that is the change in the foundation formula. A change in the foundation formula by itself will not solve the problems because the problems that exist in rural Manitoba are really very basic and they stem from the inequities that exist in the assessment practices in this province. I have spoken on assessment in this province in this Chamber on several occasions and the sum total of the efforts that this government has made in eight years to remove the inequities in the assessment practices, and the government themselves recognize that they are there, the sum total of the effort that have been made is to remove the assessment section from the Municipal Act and put it up in a separate Act of the Legislature. Eight years, Mr. Chairman, and that is the only effort that has been made.

I notice the present Attorney-General is walking out of the Chamber and I don't blame him because for several years he was the Minister of Municipal Affairs and has done nothing about it. He has done absolutely nothing about it.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to point out, in the past few years, that the assessment on farm land has increased roughly 70 percent, the assessment. In the past few years, in the City of Winnipeg, the total assessment in the city has increased 20.8 percent. Now, what does that do in the field of education? That means that the rate of increase in taxation on the farmers in Manitoba has increased 70 percent in the foundation formula as compared to 20 percent in the city. That's on the foundation program only. That's one part of it.

But I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that until we look at the assessment practices in this province and eliminate the . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. I have been listening carefully to the honourable member and I think I made a ruling before that we would be speaking on Grants. Now, the honourable member is starting to wander off into assessments, taxation. Under that section I would suggest to the honourable member that the Minister's salary would be a very good spot, if he wishes, to speak on taxation, but I think he should get back to the topic under discussion, Rule 64, Item 2, relevant to the item under discussion which is the Grant Structure. The Honourable Member for Birtle-Russell.

MR. GRAHAM: Mr. Chairman, I would like to refer you to the Estimates and I believe we are not talking about grants, we are talking about Financing of Education.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. We are now on School Grants and Other Assistance, (a) of 50 on Page 20. Now, the Chair has been lax; we've had a little bit of a hassle here this afternoon about this. Now the Chair is going to rule that you speak to the item under discussion or cease. The Honourable Member for Birtle-Russell.

MR. GRAHAM: Very well, Mr. Chairman. I have been attempting to point out that assessment foundation formula and your Property Tax Credits are all implements which are necessary and essential if you are going to consider changing the system that is used in assisting school boards in financing education. I think that you have to start with the assessment first, then change the foundation program. If you are going to live up to the philosophy that you have espoused and continue to espouse and promote in this province, of equality of the human condition and all the arguments that you put forward in that respect.

Mr. Chairman, if we are going to look at any logical revision in the grant structure, in the financing, we have to look at the total package and not just a few patches on the quilt that the Minister is trying to bring forward at this time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Sturgeon Creek.

MR. J. FRANK JOHNSTON: Oh, I'm in a much better mood today, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I was listening to the Minister yesterday talking about the bottom line and on this subject of grants I would compliment him, first of all, on the direction that he is going in elementary education and basic education being taught in the schools, but the Minister has been going about the province, or since his announcements, has been saying that I am increasing the teacher grants for elementary education. Now, since he said that yesterday I have done some checking and we've had some calls to our school board already saying, you know, my child has been in a classroom with thirty children and now the Minister has announced that you're going to get all the money you want for more teachers, you've got the money in your pocket, and when are you going to get it done.

Well, Mr. Chairman, I would like to question the Minister on this basis, that you are leading the school divisions into a direction that is very good but you are saying, and I believe in the St. James-Assiniboia area, that comes up to fifteen more teachers. Fifteen teacher grants. But a teacher grant is worth about \$8,000 and the teacher is worth about \$16,000. Now when you're leading them into this direction, the way I see it, you are only giving them fifty-cent dollars. And the only place left to pick up that money is from the special levy. Now if you are going to lead the school divisions into this

direction, and I believe it is the right course, the Minister has to be prepared to say that I'm going to pay for it, or else cannot give the idea that he is picking up all the money for the teacher grants because he's only picking up 50 percent. And the only other place that that school division can get that money is from the special levy. Now the Minister has to resign himself to the fact that he is not picking up all the teacher money that will be required to lead them into the direction they are going.

I wonder if the Minister would comment on that.

MR. TURNBULL: Mr. Chairman, I have no particular comments. I think in reference to speeches made by the Member for Brandon West, I did say that anyone who knew education finance and read the letter that was sent out, or indeed had heard the announcement that I read out in this House, would understand the point that the Member for Sturgeon Creek is making.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Resolution 51. The Honourable Member for Sturgeon Creek.

MR. F. JOHNSTON: Mr. Chairman, the letter is there. You have pupil grants, etc., equalization grants, but you are also saying to them that they are getting X number of dollars' or teacher grants, in this case, for fifteen teachers, and really they are only getting grants for eight teachers because it's fifty-cent dollars and the only place they can pick it up is by adding to their special levies. You're telling them to increase their costs to go in the direction you are going.

MR. TURNBULL: Well, Mr. Speaker, first of all the letter did indicate the increase in the number of authorizations would mean not only an increase in the grant for the salaries of the different teacher authorizations. In total it goes from \$76,802,000 voted in 1976 to a total of \$80,321,000 this year. That's an estimate, of course. That's the total increase. Now what I said in the letter was \$2 million, the reason being, you know, that there are adjustments in this salary line here that I just read out for increments in those teacher salaries.

In addition, because of the increased authorizations as the result in the reduction in the teacher-pupil ratio, there is an increase estimated, well I'll give the gross figures to the member. In 1976 the voted for maintenance, administration, and supply was \$21,402,000. It's now \$22,282,000. Now that line represents a block grant of \$2,180 additional for each additional teacher authorization. The additional authorizations resulting from the reduction in the pupil ratio. So not only is the salary provided but there is also the increase in the block grant. That's the direct thing but then let us not forget, as the member knows, that we have a Foundation Program here which consists of, you know, a number of lines, 6 lines. That's the Foundation Program. And then on the grants program it consists of 17 lines. It's a total package and the teacher authorizations — the reduction in teacher-pupil ratio — cannot be considered in isolation. So that when he makes reference to fifty-cent dollars it's a neat way of putting it but there are these other grant monies coming forward, not only for the block grant of \$2,180 from each additional authorization but then, of course, the increase of 25 percent in the per pupil grants which totals \$27 million, and etcetera all the way through here.

So, you know, I recognize the point that he is making but it is a total package and when we were attempting to work out this package, when we had some of the budgets in, it was evident that in ghost-dollar terms the divisions would be further ahead. They come out ahead in this scheme. And, you know, I can appreciate the point that he is making but I think that the scheme does benefit most divisions.

MR. F. JOHNSTON: Mr. Chairman, with a little figuring here, I would say that the Minister has just said that he may have brought the teacher grant up to maybe \$11,000 now. The average cost of a teacher in the school division is \$16,000. What the Minister is saying, that the per-pupil grant has been increased, and there's going to have to be \$4,000 more found from somewhere to take care of those extra teachers. You know the Minister is saying I'm giving them the total package but when he leads them in the direction that he is leading them into, on elementary which I have said is right, you are saying take some of the extra package and put it on to teachers or don't hire as many teachers. It really boils down to the Minister is leaving an impression that the government is picking up all the money for the extra teachers, for the direction he is advising them to go, and he is not picking up all that money. He is not picking up all that money. There is a figure, and I can't be exact, as the Minister well knows right now, of possibly \$4,000 to \$5,000 that must come from somewhere if the school division goes in the direction that he is asking them to go.

MR. TURNBULL: Mr. Chairman, really the only response I can make to the member's argument which he has put to me twice now, in addition to what I have already responded, is that the divisions are already paying 100 percent of the salary of the teachers that are employed. They are already paying it. This change doesn't require them to pay any additional salary for those teachers that are there. What the letter said, I assume you've got a copy, and if he reads it over, he will see that the points that he's attempting to make have been covered in the letter. These salaries that he's saying, "There's a difference between the actual salary and the authorization," that's true, but the actual salary is now paid by the division. They're paying 100 percent now.

MR. F. JOHNSTON: I think the Minister is saying they're paying 100 percent salaries if they're over the number of teachers that they're supposed to have in that division, but you are extending the grants to go a certain direction and the Minister is stating "I am picking it up", and he is not picking it

all up. I might say, Mr. Chairman, it leaves a false impression.

MR. TURNBULL: Mr. Chairman, nothing could be further from my intent. Nothing could be further from what I have said publicly. Nothing could be further from what is stated in this letter, and nothing could be further from what both the representatives of the trustees and representatives of the teachers and representatives of the superintendents and business organizations understand. They understand what is happening here. I really don't know what to do, other than read the letter to the member. I'm not trying to be . . .

MR. TURNBULL: I will, I guess, just have to proceed with reading the letter.

"The Foundation Program for 1975 will provide for an increase of over 280 in the authorized number of teachers. The increase in authorizations will be determined through a change in the teacher-pupil ratio and in the calculation for determining the authorized number of principals, supervisors, guidance counsellors and other such staff. The ratio for both elementary and secondary teacher grant authorizations in 1977 will be one in twenty-three."

That is what I have announced' that we are reducing the teacher-pupil ratio in the elementary schools for purposes of paying out grants for the authorized teachers.

To continue with the letter: "The adjustment in the ratio will mean, not only additional salary grants for the number of increased authorizations, but also the block grant of 2,180 for each additional authorization. The result of this change will mean over 2 million for salaries and for maintenance, administration and supply."

Now that figure, as I've indicated to the member - it hurts me to use the word, but that figure of 2 million is a conservative figure in terms of what the actual increase was, which I indicated to the Member for Sturgeon Creek. It really goes from 76.8 million to 80.3 million' and I told him that the difference between the conservative "two" mentioned in the letter in this line here, is because of increments.

The letter continues to say this: "As in the past, additional salary grants, allowances, will be provided for principals, vice-principals, guidance counsellors and other administrative instructional personnel. The maximum number of allowances will be slightly larger than in 1976."

In this category, if memory serves, we're going to be paying out a little more than another \$50,000 for these people, for people in these positions.

"These allowances will be determined on a pupil-enrolment basis, rather than on the basis of ten percent of the number of authorized teachers. The schedule and formula for calculating the maximum number of additional allowances is enclosed herewith."

Now, if we're going to reduce the teacher-pupil ratio, as we have done, you have to put some kind of a cap on so that the divisions cannot just hire as many assistant superintendents, vice-principals, principals, guidance counsellors, etc., as they want. So the cap we put on was the per pupil. We set so many grants for these kinds of administrative personnel at the old rates. They're the same rates carried forward from the 10 percent capping that we used to have, to the per pupil capping that we're now imposing.

"For administrative allowances", the letter sent out to the division says, "the additional salaries grant allowances payable for assistant superintendents, principals, assistant principals, supervisors and guidance counsellors, are as set out in Schedule "A" of Manitoba Regulation P250R11."

Now, if I can just switch from the letter to the regulations, in P250R11, Section 7. "The approved amount for grants for an assistant principal, a supervisor, a counsellor, an assistant superintendent or a superintendent, is the amount determined under the salary grant table plus" — you know what I'm referring to there — "plus (a) \$800 for an assistant principal of a school of not less than 20 classrooms, (b) \$800 for a supervisor or a counsellor, (c) \$3,500 for an assistant superintendent of unitary division that is not less than 150 authorized teachers, (d) \$4,000 for a superintendent."

What we are doing is continuing forward those dollar amounts in this scheme, only saying, instead of there being a cap of 10 percent, there will be a cap determined on pupil enrolment. That's all by way of digression. So as the letter appendix says, "P250R11, but the maximum number of each such personnel in respect of whom the additional salaries grant allowances are payable, will be determined as follows: (a) where the average enrolment of the unitary division is less than 3,000, the maximum number is determined by dividing the enrolment by 200 adding one for any remainder and (b) where the average enrolment of the unitary division is 3,000 or more, a maximum number is determined by dividing the enrolment by 220 and adding one for any remainder."

The point of all this, Mr. Chairman, is to say that all that the department has done, all that I have asked it to do is reduce the per pupil ratio for the purposes of the province paying out teacher grants per authorized teachers. And I have given the conservative estimate of \$2 million as the additional amount of money. Nowhere in this letter does it say that we are putting in all the extra money, and all the groups involved in education know that. That's the way it is. The administrative grants that add a 10 percent cap, as I explained, those grants in terms of dollars will be continued on the same dollar amounts, the only difference being we move from what I call a 10 percent cap to a per-pupil

enrolment cap. That's it. It's perfectly simple.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. LYON: Mr. Chairman, under the general question of school grants, I wonder if the Member from Osborne could indicate to us the scale of grants or what grants are being paid this year and under what programs to the independent schools of Manitoba.

MR. TURNBULL: Mr. Chairman, the Member for Souris-Killarney asked the Member for Osborne to answer that question. The Member for Osborne will not answer that question, but the Minister of Education will. The Minister of Education will say that the Department of Education does not pay schools, it grants to independent pays grants to school divisions.

MR. LYONS: Has the Minister of Education had recent communication with the Manitoba Federation of Independent Schools with respect to support to that organization that is being sought by that group, by way of tax deferrals or tax deductions, for fees that are paid for children in private schools?

MR. TURNBULL: Yes, Mr. Speaker, they have made representation to me for various special concessions.

MR. LYON: . . . advising the House what the government's policy is with respect to those requests?

MR. TURNBULL: No, Mr. Chairman.

MR. LYON: Well, has the government got a policy, Mr. Chairman?

MR. TURNBULL: The Department of Education has not worked out a policy on the special concessions asked for by the Independent Schools Association.

MR. LYON: When can we expect that that policy will be announced or when will it be worked out?

MR. TURNBULL: Mr. Chairman, I expect when I get through my estimates and have some time, to give my attention to those other matters that are of concern to people relating to the Department of Education.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Sturgeon Creek.

MR. F. JOHNSTON: Mr. Chairman, I am not going to belabour the point but I reminded the Minister when I first stood up that there are already people, and even the teachers' organizations, wondering when the school divisions are going to make the changes that they believe are possible because of the Minister's announcements. And may I remind the Minister that he said, "People in education understand this." I would like to say to the Minister that the public does not understand this and that when it does come to some extra costs to go in the direction that he is wanting the school divisions to go. The Minister should not be leaving the impression that the government is picking this all up, all the costs up, because he basically isn't. You can almost say that within the divisions it might be a "Rob Peter to pay Paul" basis to get these extra teachers to go that way. But the people in education may understand it but right now the public are not.

MR. TURNBULL: Mr. Chairman, you know although I have laid out in the letter to the divisions what the situation actually is, there is nothing in the letter that requires the divisions to apply the extra authorizations in the manner that they could apply them, namely to cover those teachers that are over grant. If the divisions wish, they can continue to maintain the same number of over-grant teachers as they always have if that is what they want to do, that is their local discretion, they can do that. But I don't think that the understanding of this issue is as restricted as perhaps the exchange I have had with the Member for Sturgeon Creek might indicate. Indeed even the editorial writers of the Winnipeg Tribune understand what the program is all about. And I did see a letter, an editorial, in that newspaper which spelled out the precise point that the Member for Sturgeon Creek has just indicated. So I do not believe that there is any lack of understanding on behalf of the majority of people, particularly those who read that editorial.

MR. F. JOHNSTON: Mr. Chairman, the Minister keeps saying things and that's quite true, they don't have to use the money the way the Minister has . . . Well, let me put it this way. They can use the money any way they like but the Minister has made a point since he has become Minister and, in this House since this session started, of saying that the government believes and is going to work with the school boards or the school divisions on the basis of making elementary and basic education better, and that the government is going to work with them to do this. Now if they don't spend the money that way after the Minister has made these announcements, somebody is really going to get their hair cut short. I think some trustees are really going to be on the block if it isn't done after the statements the Minister has made. I wish the Minister would just consider that because that is what is happening.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

MR. AXWORTHY: Mr. Chairman, if I may be allowed to simply divert the topic, topic, not to any more restful area of examination but certainly a different one. —(Interjection)— That's right.

The discussion that we had this morning was an interesting one, Mr. Chairman, between the Member from River Heights and the Minister concerning the global problems of reforming the whole financial arrangement of the support system for education in the province. The only thing, it didn't

Friday, March 11, 1977

come to any resolution and there was a great deal of rhetoric, I think, about the need to make changes. Unfortunately my expectations which were being built up rapidly as this exchange went on came to naught because both concluded that it was indeed a serious, complex, strenuous problem for which there was no real solution other than the ones that involve those people who can't answer for themselves in this House, and that's the Federal Government.

But be that as it may, Mr. Chairman, I would like to take up on that particular invitation to make some specific recommendations concerning problems in the school system that are caused by the present financial anomalies, or aberrations if you like, which still have not been answered by the recent announcement that the Minister made on the increased support or the increased equalization grants. As the Minister might expect, my concern today, as it has been for the last several years, has been the curious predicament that the city schools find themselves in, dealing with an exceptional kind of educational problem. And in point, Mr. Chairman, their problem does go back to initial curiosity in the funding arrangement, that strange device that was devised in 1971 called The Greater Winnipeg School Levy by which the City of Winnipeg, and I believe the school division of Fort Garry, are required to, as it works out in practice, to subsidize the other school divisions in the Greater Winnipeg area. And I have not yet quite found any Minister of Education or Finance or anyone else to quite explain to me the contradiction whereby the Minister announced today — or I think it was yesterday, one of these days — that there was to be an additional \$300,000 over the \$700,000 that was given last year, a million dollars in total, in recognition of the special educational conditions in the City of Winnipeg division. At the same time they are allowing close to \$7 million to be taken out of the City of Winnipeg division through the Greater Winnipeg Levy, and you have this curious arrangement where you have again a number of transfers of moneys which are really pretty silly when you get down to it. We're taking money through the Greater Winnipeg Levy, they give it to another school division; in the meantime the province takes taxes to give it back to the same school division and it just doesn't seem to make much sense. It really is a kind of a Catch 22 proposition. And it frankly, Mr. Chairman, is a pretty frustrating kind of arrangement because it doesn't have any apparent benchmark.

When the Minister gets up to say he is prepared to recognize the special needs of the city division in terms of the inner city schools, the fact that there are requirements for a number of new educational or different educational programs required, teaching of immigrant children, the particular problems of native education, the difficulties in establishing any form of permanency or stability in the school system. How does he arrive at \$1 million for that? What is the basis for the \$1 million grant? What formula, what measurement, what guideline does he have to say that's a million dollars worth of extra trouble . . . —(Interjection)— . . . extra difficulties that this school division has? In other words, it seems to me, Mr. Chairman, all we're doing is playing the old pull-the-rabbit-out-of-the-hat game, that if you give X number of dollars, that is enough to assuage your conscience or indicate your concern. But it has no realistic relevance to what the problems may really be. The city division itself estimates as much as it's able to, that the additional cost borne by it, in terms of dealing with inner city school programs as they now are, at several millions of dollars, not one. But even more serious than that, they also say that they are just able at the present moment to brush the problem, that they have not really been able to tackle it in the kind of concerted, concentrated way that it deserves. And part of that, Mr. Chairman, I think goes back to a critique that I would really make of the . . . again going back to the Department of Education. I don't they really know, we don't know, what the inner city schools really are facing. What is it, the kind of conditions that they have to face that make them different from other city schools? Is it the fact that there are a number of low-income children going there? Is it the fact that in many of the schools the transiency rate is 50 percent, 60, 70, sometimes closer to 80 or 90 percent, or 100 percent in some schools? Is it the fact that a large percentage of the children come from working-parent homes, in many cases single-parent homes, and therefore the schools are required to provide additional services at noon hour, after 4? Is it because the schools are located in physically deteriorated areas? Is it because the school plant itself is wearing out?

What is it that indicates this problem because I think it's a combination of all those. All I'm simply saying is I find it pretty unusual in this day and age when we have the technical capacity to send men to the moon, where we can organize vast managerial arrangements to move money around to oil companies and we have massive management programs that run huge multi-national corporations, that we can't figure out what the schools need in an inner city, that we haven't quite acquired the capacity to put some simple criteria down to say: here are schools that are facing some abnormal, exceptional, unusual circumstances, that we need to provide additional unusual programs to meet those and this is what it's going to cost. I don't think anyone in this province knows. The Minister doesn't appear to know; the school divisions don't appear to know. They simply say we've got the problems, we know that and we think that these are the costs that we're running into but no one has really yet capsulized what the conditions are and what that should mean in terms of the amount of money that should be spent.

Frankly, Mr. Chairman, that's a very expensive way of dealing with the problem. It may appear cheap but it's one of those, I guess classic propositions that by doing things in a kind of rinky-dink way, it ends up costing governments and society an awful lot more money. There's no question that there is a direct linkage between the exceptional problems of juvenile delinquency and what's going on in the schools. There is a connecting link between the two of them and those are connecting link questions of truancy rights and all the other syndrome of problems that arise into it. Yet we really don't know.

I guess what I'm simply saying, Mr. Chairman, I don't think that the so-called Winnipeg special grant is really a special grant at all. I think it's pin-money. It simply is designed to make a gesture — (Interjection)— no, I think the Minister of Corrections knows what I'm talking about, I'm not downgrading the fact that it is a million dollars — I'm simply saying that if the Department of Education wanted to deal fairly and equitably with those problems, then they do something about getting rid of the Greater Winnipeg levy which would give the City of Winnipeg an additional \$6 million to deal with its problems. That would be a way of dealing with it; that would be some sort of formula. I don't see the Minister as having a great deal of anxiety but I thought he needed a rest after all the jumping up and down, I thought he might enjoy a little stay in his seat. If he could constrain himself, I think that there are some additional remarks to be made.

In addition to the problems of the schools themselves and the fact that there is no realistic formula attached to the funding of for those special problems, unlike other school divisions, like the Greater Toronto school authorities which have developed a formula, which do apply a formula which the province pays for, we do not have a similar one in the Province of Manitoba and I don't know why.

But beyond that, I think the levy itself creates additional hardships for people in the city and I would say in the School Division of Fort Garry as well because one of the interesting problems — we heard this discussion this morning — I think the Minister said, "It all comes out of the same pocket; when it gets down to paying taxes for schools, everyone pays the same." That is not true, Mr. Chairman. If the Minister is saying that, he doesn't understand school finance very well because school finance is apportioned to different people in different ways and one of the again problems with the way that the Greater Winnipeg levy works is that if Fort Garry or the City of Winnipeg have to raise additional dollars through their special levy, they have to raise almost double that amount to pay for the Greater Winnipeg levy along with it.

For every dollar raised for special levy in the Winnipeg School Division' they have to raise an extra 50 cents to pay for the Greater Winnipeg levy that goes along with it. Now again, that's a pretty dumb way of doing things, Mr. Chairman. If the people who it hurts are not all the taxpayers and there are those who are least able to afford the special levy, there is now a growing movement in the City of Winnipeg of senior citizens who still are managing to try to hold on to their own homes because they simply find that the taxation problem on property is getting too heavy. Part of the problem is being faced because of the educational costs that are being attached because of the Greater Winnipeg levy and what they're simply saying is that it's not a cheap trick; it happens to be a real one. The fact of the matter is that if you, by dint of additional expenses, force these people to leave those homes or sell them, then it's up to the Minister of Manitoba Housing to find an additional \$30,000 capital and an additional \$200 a month subsidy to find a place for them.

Now again, that's not good economics; that's a bad trade-off, a very bad trade-off. Again, it seems to me that we're allowing these kinds of curiosities to exist in the funding system which leads to both an unrealistic apportionment of funds to needs as it applies to Inner City schools and at the same time allows an unfair inequitable apportionment of costs to people who are least able to afford it. For those two reasons, I find that the statements of the Minister that he is seriously concerned about equity and equality, not to fit the facts because if he were concerned about that, he would have done something about this particular problem and would have worked much more diligently to have come up with the ways of reorganizing it. I don't expect him to have been able to have a quick answer to the request from the Member for River Heights to find the ultimate all-time solution to funding of schools but I surely would have expected him to come up with some realistic solutions to these particular problems.

MR. TURNBULL: Mr. Chairman, the Member for Fort Rouge has acuity of interest with me about the problems of the inner city and indeed, since being Minister of Education, I have tried to come to grips with some method of providing funding for the inner core city area that would be equitable, that would recognize the particular problems that they have there.

The point that he makes that I want to deal with first though, is his question of senior citizens and the property taxes that they pay. There are senior citizens that are paying taxes, that is, retired people who are paying taxes, but they are, I am told by representatives of their particular organization about 1,400 in number. Most of the others who own their own homes don't pay school taxes because the Property Tax Credit Plan gives them the maximum benefit if they are on the old age pension of \$350.00 and that covers in most cases, the school taxes that a retired person would have to pay. I have done my constituency work. He and I, I know, do a great deal of constituency work; he does it with a

little more publicity than I but I think we do just about as much. I've got the figures, I've got the tax statements of private — (Interjection)— who are you talking to?

I've The guy behind me, okay. got the property tax forms of people living in different parts of my riding; I've seen what they have paid; I've seen a decline in actual net tax paid out that occurred a few years back and that kind of thing; I know the situation. So I don't think that there are many senior citizens in their own homes who are paying more than \$350 in school taxes alone which is, of course, the maximum rebate that they are entitled to. get. In addition, they as you know, the cost of living tax credit and if they are retired, they get the maximum benefit there too. My recollection is that that is about \$141.00. A senior citizen on old age pension living in their own home would get a rebate of \$490 or thereabouts which, again, you know it's the old argument I'm getting from the opposition: What's a million; what's \$23 million? One can say what's \$490 but I don't know, perhaps it's the way I was brought up, \$490 is a lot of money to me and I think it's a lot of money to most people, certainly in the area that I represent.

The Member for Fort Rouge wanted to know why we have this bookkeeping arrangement with the Greater Winnipeg equalization scheme in place and then the particular funds that we pay out from the province to S.D.No.1. The reason for the Greater Winnipeg equalization, as I am sure he knows, was to offset the increase that some expected in municipal taxes for a higher level of municipal services that was to be provided to other areas and I don't want to get any members opposite going on this particular point but that was the reason and the Greater Winnipeg equalization scheme then was introduced not solely for the purpose of equalizing school taxes but to equalize the total amount of tax on property right across the urban area. The rationalization of it, the basis of it, of course, is the assessment on that division with the lowest per pupil cost in the urban area. We have been looking at the formula; it is one that I will have to leave to the budget. I give my opponent every opportunity to flay away at me; I cannot really announce anything with regard to Greater Winnipeg equalization until the budget comes down but I have given him the rationale which, if he has forgotten it, he is now reminded of.

The Greater Winnipeg equalization scheme, of course, is apart from what the Provincial Government contributes in the way of money. It is a pooling of moneys from the various urban municipalities and then a redistribution of that money to the different divisions. He asked for some rationale at how we arrived with the trustees of School Division No. 1 at the dollars that is in the budget we are discussing today for payment to them for the particular problems encountered by S.D. No. 1 in the urban core.

The rationale is not a formula. The rationale came from a proposal made by School Division No. 1 to my predecessor, which listed a number of areas, a number of items that they thought constituted particular problems that they had in their area. That total offset what we thought was reasonable, established two bargaining positions and we have worked towards an agreement. If he wants to know, that's what it is, it's a negotiated position. It was \$700,000 last year equivalent to about one mill, this year it's a million which is equivalent to approximately 1.5 mills. He wants the answer, that's it. However, in addition to the million dollars in special Winnipeg grants, Winnipeg School Division grant that we are giving out, there is also a column of other grants that Winnipeg School Division receives. So we have the million dollars which are in the other grants package which I enumerated for members opposite the other day in both 21(3)(a) a million dollars, I did enumerate it, in addition to that there is also in the Estimate of Budget Review for Winnipeg Division No. 1 another total of \$1.7 million, \$1,762,000. That \$1,762,000 should be net of the \$910,000 in equalization grants they got. So the net amount there between those two figures, plus the million dollars, is what they get by way of special grants from the province of Manitoba. I recognize the point that he's making. I certainly appreciate that S.D. No. 1 should have recognition for the particular problems that they have. The recognition that I have been able to extract from my colleagues is an additional \$300,000 for this year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

MR. AXWORTHY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that the comments of the Minister are a part explanation, while they may explain the reasons why, they don't necessarily provide us with a rational reason why and I think that that still is the difficulty that we have, that there is still the quality of haphazardness to this whole process that disturbs me. That it simply is seems to be a matter of responding or passive responses to conditions rather than any attempt to develop a fairly well thought out policy and program that would be designed to provide that incentive, financial or otherwise, that would enable the schools in the city to make more than partial responses to the problems that they're having. In this respect, Mr. Chairman, you could certainly look at the, even at the way at which the funding formulas are worked out, that there really isn't any additional provision, for example, to introduce or pay for, help pay for, the development of community school concepts or community school programs in the inner city. No, it's not a capital program it's an operational program. The basic function of a community school has nothing to do with the physical structure, it

really has to do with the operational structure and that in those areas where experiments or pilot projects have been tried, like William Whyte and Shaughnessy, the obvious requirement of the school system is for para-professional workers, sometimes community organizers, to work in conjunction with the school, to bring about the involvement of parents, to develop educational programs that are beyond the traditional curriculum that operate at noon-hours, after four, weekends, in the evening, to provide services to many of the children who are delinquent and who very rarely darken the door of any school and it is that particular kind of problem which again concerns me. That simply by saying here's a million bucks go out and solve the problems schools, that doesn't really come to grips with the fact that the inner city schools themselves must apply very different, sometimes very innovative, sometimes costly kinds of programs to respond to the conditions that they face. The teaching of children of alternative languages . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister of Education state his point of order.

MR. TURNBULL: Mr. Chairman, my point of order is that the Member for Fort Rouge is now reverted to Resolution 49(2) Evaluation, Research and Policy Analysis, it was in that resolution that we discussed departmental support in terms of seconded personnel to the operation of community schools such as Shaughnessy Park and William Whyte. Indeed, Sir, I know that well because I went with our staff from that branch to Shaughnessy Park to visit the, in part provincially supported community school operation there and there are others. So, you know, we are now on Grants, Resolution 53(a) and, although I don't wish to not have a discussion of this, I just point out to the member that he must have missed the discussion on Evaluation, Policy and Research where we did discuss departmental support for operation of community schools.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The point is well taken. The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

MR. AXWORTHY: Mr. Chairman, I beg to differ, the point is not well taken by the Minister because he's going . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. I said the point is well taken. Will the honourable member please continue on the grant structures as we are now . . .

MR. AXWORTHY: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I would like to remind the Chairman of this Committee as well as the Minister, that when the issue was raised two nights ago in this House the Minister said, "Would the Member from Fort Rouge wait until we have come to discussing the Grant structure" — at which time he would be quite prepared to discuss it. That is in Hansard, Mr. Chairman and I will refer you to it because that was the statement made by the Minister. Now he seems to be going back on his word which is maybe the lateness of the hour and he's been . . . I would refer you to a discussion, I believe it was either Monday night or Tuesday night, and that was exactly the statement by this Minister and frankly, you know, the fact that the Minister tried to weasel out of this by sort of all of a sudden raising a point of order — (Interjection) — No, the point of the matter is that it was a nice little sort of way of trying to climb off the limb and I frankly think that that is nothing but a delaying tactic by this Minister.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Order please. The Honourable Minister of Education.

MR. TURNBULL: I don't know what possesses the Member for Fort Rouge. Out of the House he's quite a reasonable person. In the House he wants to get snotty most of the time. I am not trying to get out of a debate. If he wants to have a debate on this issue, that is perfectly all right with me. If it is as he says and I did ask him to defer this to this item, fine, we can discuss it here, there is no problem with that. But to suggest, as he did, that I in some way have some nefarious intent here, I just think is a matter of privilege and I would appreciate it if he would revert to the nice guy he is out of the House and just take it as I meant it, to try to keep the proceedings of the House in order. We can have the debate here if we wish, it doesn't make any difference to me.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

MR. AXWORTHY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I do want to clarify, at no time did I think the intent of the Minister was nefarious. I thought at all times it was very obvious what he was trying to do and therefore, Mr. Chairman, I think volte-face that I'm prepared to accept his and proceed with the discussion of what we were trying to discuss, which is the fact of the matter that we're not talking about pilot projects we're talking about the lack of any basic stated policy on the part of this government to deal with the issue of inner city schools and provide sufficient funding thereof. That is the problem, that is the issue, that is the lack of response that this government has made and I'm simply saying that I think now for the last three years we've received nothing but apologies, excuses and rationalizations on the part of the government.

They simply provide a little dribble of money each year so that they can in part assuage whatever major complaints are made, but again, you know, you can waste an awful lot of money simply by letting it dribble away and until this government is prepared to face what's going on in the schools in the inner city and bring forward the kind of resources that will enable the schools to make an effective response to it, frankly the problems will simply get worse and we'll be wasting the money that we're spending now. I think that if the Minister has visited those schools, as he says he has, as I have as well, he will know what they're asking for is simply a basic framework, a policy that they can work within

and then go out and do the job. But if they have to simply be going cap in hand, month by month, hoping for another grant, waiting, making another application, holding another meeting, then they spend 50 percent of their time having to hustle through these halls trying to get some money to do the job and not work on the job itself. And again, Mr. Chairman, we keep coming back to the point, the way that the government and the Department of Education deals with problems is by avoiding them and that's not really the kind of commitment that I think this Minister keeps saying that he's making. He says he wants to solve these problems. Well, he doesn't solve them simply by side-stepping them and then putting another little grant to keep the thing hanging on for another year or so. He comes out with some policy that makes some sense, puts some funding that makes some sense so people have some sense of consistency and stability so they know what they're doing. And I simply suggest to him that if he looks at the facts and figures, that the school conditions in the City of Winnipeg are changing rapidly and in many cases far quicker than his partial changing for the worst year by year, "Here's another little grant for you fellows," kind of approach, is responding to. Now this is not something that has just simply come up this time, this issue has been raised in this House for the last three or four years, I know because I have been raising it and every year we get the same rationalization, "We're doing our part." Well I don't think that they are, Mr. Chairman. I think, frankly, that it really is a major vacuum of responsibility that we're facing and there's a lot of people suffering as a result.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Resolution 50(a)— pass. The Honourable Member for Brandon West.

MR. EDWARD MCGILL: Mr. Chairman, the problem that arose in connection with the discussion of the matters which the Member for Fort Rouge brought up, reminded me of some of the inconsistencies of the Minister in a previous occasion when I asked a question about the policy relating to school construction and the Minister indicated at that time that it couldn't be discussed under this item 3(a), but a short time later the same question, or a question of similar intent was asked by another member and the Minister provided the answers without any hesitation. Either he had forgotten that he had taken an opposite position just a few hours before, or he had somehow decided that the matter had changed in intent and was now logically a part of the item under review. Mr. Chairman I don't think we should be surprised by the fact that there seems to be a bit of inconsistency in the positions taken by the Minister in relation to what can be discussed and what cannot be discussed under item 3(a). The question that I had posed to the Minister was that of whether or not the department would give any indication of guidelines to the divisions in respect to spending for capital purposes and, as I now understand it, they are prepared to accept letters of intent, that is the public school finance board is prepared to receive a letter of intent and to give an indication of general approval in that area.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. The hour being 4:30, the hour has arrived for Private Members' Hour. Committee rise and report. Call in the Speaker.

040

IN SESSION

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Honourable Member for Logan.

MR. WILLIAM JENKINS: Mr. Speaker, I would like to move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Point Douglas, that the report of the committee be received.

MOTION presented and carried.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Flin Flon.

MR. THOMAS BARROW: Mr. Speaker, I would like to make two changes on committees, with leave. The Minister of Finance replaced the Minister of Mineral Resources on the Committee of Public Accounts. On Law Amendments, the Minister of Industry and Commerce replaced the Minister of Northern Affairs.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. It's agreed and noted. The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HONOURABLE SAMUEL USKIW (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, I believe the consensus of the House is that we adjourn for the week, so I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Tourism, that the House do now adjourn.

MOTION presented and carried and the House adjourned until 2:30 p.m. Monday.