



Second Session — Thirty-Second Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

31-32 Elizabeth II

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Second Legislature

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, 25 April, 1983.

Time — 8:00

SUPPLY - EDUCATION

MR. CHAIRMAN, P. Eyler: Committee come to order. We are considering the Estimates of the Department of Education. Item 1.(g)(1) Communications: Salaries. Madam Minister.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if I could take a moment to make a couple of points related to the discussions we had this afternoon. I do have the information that the Member for Tuxedo requested regarding the Board of Reference hearings. We have summarized the ones that were in this budget year, listed them and given a very short explanation. I will give him this copy and if he wants any more detailed information on any of them we'd be glad to provide it.

I wonder, also, if I could comment on one other item that came up in relation to, when is an item going to be discussed. I noticed a bit of surprise on the face of the Member for Tuxedo when he was asking the question of where capital projects might be discussed and I said that it would be appropriate under 16.(a) and he was a little bit surprised.

I'd like to clarify that the Public Schools' Finance Board has two sections and the distribution of money to schools is the portion of the Public Schools Finance Board activity, that is under that 16.(3)(a) line, and that would include all money that's allocated to school divisions plus the questions related to role and function and activities of the board. The capital portion of their section of responsibilities is under 16.(8), and if it's all right with the Member for Tuxedo, we would prefer to proceed with those two splits and have all the capital dealt with where it's designated, under 16.(8).

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Tuxedo.

MR. G. FILMON: I thank the Minister for that information. I just ask in anticipation of the discussion whether or not she has also the information that I'd asked about the Communications Branch, where the people have come from and so on.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Yes, I do. Would he like me to start with that?

MR. G. FILMON: If I may I will take just a brief time to look through the information on the Board of Reference. Perhaps that can be left until a later point, I may have no questions on it. We did initiate the discussion on the Communications section and I'm just wondering if we could carry on with that at the present time and we may get back to the Board of Reference or we may just leave it. This summary may be sufficient for my purposes.

The concern that I had expressed to the Minister just prior to adjournment was the concern that we

appear to have an entirely new branch performing some functions that had been carried out by the department previously but expanded to an extent that surprises me quite honestly; the fact that we have seven positions set forth in this branch which is, as I said, new to some extent. The Minister might be able to explain to what extent it is new in her department, but certainly it's new as an item. She has indicated that they are now carrying on part of the activities that were formerly carried on by Field Services and part of the activities that were formerly carried on by the Management Information Services. I was surprised at the fact that the Minister indicated the two positions are vacant and it hasn't been decided what the role of those two positions would be or whether or not they are in fact necessary, that that would be part of the discussion and determination of the new director and with the department that kind of thing would be determined.

It seems to me that the government and this Minister must have had something in mind when they set up this Communications area. They must have a defined role and they must know what they're intending to do with this branch. I would like to know a great deal more about it before we're prepared to pass this item.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Well, Mr. Chairman, I can understand both the concerns and the questions being raised by the Member for Tuxedo in this area. He's making a number of points, each one of which I hope to and I should try to address his questions fully. I don't want to set up a big department or a big system with a lot of people that are not needed to do a job. We've been very careful at looking at the staff years and the jobs related to them across the department as a whole and in many cases have frozen staff positions that were not filled and that in our estimation they wouldn't need to be filled.

In this case, we're looking at what I believe to be one of the most important areas to receive consideration of whether or not the job is being done adequately to date. I think the decision that we reached when we looked at it is that it was not and I'll go into that a little bit further.

I think I'll start talking about the positions first. He indicated some concerns about the number of positions and did suggest that some of them existed, were already there. That is true. In fact, we created the branch from within the department using both people that were presently doing a job that is going to continue, and staff years within the department and operational dollars that were already assigned to do the job. What we are doing is pulling them together, I suppose, and we are changing the mandate and the role and the function. So just to give him the specific information that I think he wants about the numbers, there are seven positions in total, and three of those positions were in the Information Office which has now been expanded. I suppose you could say that we started off with a number of positions in the Information Office where they were carrying out responsibilities and tasks related to

communication. They are going to continue to do those, and because they were not adequately able to handle the full scope of the job as we have now determined it to be, we have expanded on the numbers of people.

I'll go in perhaps a little bit later about the activities that those people were performing and that are so very important to do and that we're continuing with. In addition then, we took two professional positions and one secretarial position and the director took four staff years from Field Services. That's two professional and one secretarial with the director. So what you have is a number of people that were in the department performing a communication activity and role, who are still there, to whom we have added four staff years, two of those positions having been filled; one secretarial, I believe, and one director, with two positions still unfilled. I will also be prepared to discuss in a little more detail his concerns raised about not having either filled those positions or identified the role and activity for those positions. It's not quite that clear; we have identified to some degree. What remains is that we identify the skills of the professionals that would be required to do the job.

We basically have a situation where we're using department dollars that were allocated to that function, we're using people that were assigned to that function, and we're using existing staff years within the Department of Education, so that we're doing what is going to turn out to be an expanded job, a larger task than has presently been undertaken by communications people in the department, with no increase in staff years, with no increase in operating dollars; which I think should address some of the concerns raised by the Member for Tuxedo in being concerned about additional increases of personnel and money to carry on this communication task.

I'll just summarize quickly what the changed role is going to be and why I think it is so important. To date, the communication has tended to be with the field, and I think a reasonable job has been done between communication, between the department and the field, but I can see a tremendously expanded role even there, although they were doing the job previously, because we're now working on a much more co-operative model of making decisions about programs and providing support and resources to school divisions and to schools. That is going to require a lot more close contact in communication about what the department is doing and what is happening in the field than has been the past previously.

One of the things I found is that I did not believe there was much, enough I would say, and I would go farther and say even much communication being provided between departments. In other words, within the Department of Education most of the branches tended to function by themselves. We are finding that we're losing a lot of access to information by not having a better communications system between the department, because it's quite possible where one department has gathered information and statistics and has knowledge, that it's useful to more than that specific question or a decision that individual department is making. So we definitely are opening up a situation where the branches have been asked to keep each other up-to-date with what is going on, to keep each other informed about what statistics and information

they have that can be used by other members of the department.

We are also going to have to do a better job of communicating inter-governmentally. I think that everybody recognizes the tremendous increasing sort of duplication and overlapping of responsibilities between the Department of Education, Community Services, and Health, where it's getting harder and sort of fuzzier to see where some programs begin and other programs end and whose responsibility it is. I think the setting up of the Social Envelope Committee with those three departments having representatives on it is a recognition by this government that we have to do a better job of sharing information and developing programs in concert with the other departments that are providing programs for children perhaps at the preschool age but that have an impact on what we provide.

Last, but not least, is the role of public communication. I think that we are all seeing a growing interest by the public on many really significant and important educational issues. That hasn't always been the case in the past. There hasn't been sort of a lot of activity and questions and discussion being generated by the public, but now there is. That's there for a number of reasons. The issues are getting complex, they're getting more difficult, and the decisions that we're making are having more of an impact on the public and the community than decisions did previously.

The setting up of two workshops by my department on the subject of public involvement in education is a very clear example of our beginning to attempt to involve the public in a way where they are involved in the decisions and informed of what's happening, and have a chance to get information from the department and to give information to the department.

So in summary, I would say that for doing the job with no increase in staff years, no increase in operational money - in fact, we're expanding the role and the function and doing the job with less dollars - but we are saying that there is a changed emphasis or that we are choosing, selecting the communications as a priority in the Department of Education because we are recognizing that the question of providing information to the public is a growing responsibility, that not just schools and school boards, but that the Department of Education and myself must address.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN, D. Malinowski: The Honourable Member for Tuxedo.

MR. G. FILMON: Mr. Chairman, I thank the Minister for giving me that lengthy explanation but it seems to have raised many more questions in my mind.

Referring to the need for communications interdepartmentally, surely the need isn't for communicators to talk to communicators, but for people who are responsible for particular areas to speak with people in other departments who are responsible for things in which they have an inter-base or a mutual interest that will be worked upon together. We don't need to put in a buffer zone where we have the communicators, who aren't doing the thing, talking together because they communicate very well. We need

the people who are doing the functions, talking with the people in the other departments who are doing similar functions because presumably they'll understand each other and not have to be interpreted by communicators.

The Minister refers to the Social Envelope Committee of Cabinet as causing the need for this new communications. Every Cabinet had what may be the equivalent of a Social Envelope Committee. We had one called the Social Services Committee of Cabinet, but essentially it dealt with the same sorts of areas, Health, Community Services, Education, getting together to discuss the overall areas in which they had an overlap of interests, ideas and responsibilities. This isn't a new idea and I'd like to disabuse the Minister of that feeling, that we're not after reinventing the wheel. I am going to need a great deal more justification for setting up a branch with seven people to do a function that wasn't done heretofore and appears to me to be nothing more than a propaganda machine for this Minister and her department.

Has it come to the point that education is in such disrepute in this province that we have to hire seven communicators to make the department look good? I think this is getting to be a little ridiculous. Don't the deputies in the various departments get together and talk about mutual interests anymore? Do we have to set up communicators to tell us what's happening and interpret the real functions, ideas and jobs of the people in the departments? This is not just an idea of better communication. Everybody today will agree with the need for better communication. If the Minister can set this up out of the blue, utilizing SMYs and budgets that have been approved previously in other sections of her department, then I suggest to her - and particularly when she sets it up with two positions that are vacant and not even defined as to their role - that she might better, in this time of restraint, question whether or not it's necessary to have anybody.

Is this an empire building exercise, that we have to protect our SMYs and keep all these people in place and so we have to fabricate a need for them and set up a new branch so that we keep our SMYs intact? If this is, indeed, a time in which we are evaluating and repriorizing every expenditure, then this has to be indicated as a priority. If this is a priority, how is it that we don't even know what these people are going to do but we just set aside a couple of positions in case we need them? Surely, that's not the kind of prioritization that takes place in a government that's interested in saving money.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, I think it might be important to talk a little bit about the ongoing work of these individuals; work that was done last year, the previous year and for many years before that for which there has been no change and I would like to identify a number of the major activities. One is the administrative handbook that goes out to all school divisions that includes information that schools, school divisions, school boards and teachers get on programs, regulations, statutes, teacher certification and welfare, school attendance requirements, administrative, the length of the school year and other matters related to that; the Annual Report which goes out every year; the

Education Manitoba for whom we sent out about 17,000 copies and I think there are 10 issues a year that go to all teachers, all libraries and all educational institutions. We provide school lists in the province, both French and English. Also, this branch looks after the teacher exchange; the teachers coming to this country and going from this country on teachers' exchange.

All of those activities were activities that were provided for and that continued throughout the life of the previous administration. There has been no change there. I think where there has been major change in interest is in the public arena where there are a number of absolutely critical issues of tremendous importance to both parents and members of the community, and these issues are growing in both intensity and numbers and importance, and where there is no focal point for them to gather information, nor even previously a suggestion that the Department of Education had any responsibility to provide information to them. I think that things like the immersion programs, heritage language, transportation, small school closure guidelines, where they have a great interest in knowing what the procedures and the processes are for school closure guidelines because they now are a part of the process, they now have a part to play, and they don't always know what the guidelines are and how to get a hold of them; these are issues that are a public concern. The public has a right both to give information to the Department of Education and to receive information, so we are going to take on a task that previously has not been either performed much or performed at all.

It's clear that one of the problems the public has is knowing where to go in the education system; knowing who is responsible for what in the entire system, whether it's school boards, Minister of Education, principals, the teachers; and knowing where in the Department of Education, which is a huge department with many branches as we can see through the Estimates process that we're going through now, to go to get information that they need. I think it is important that there be a central point of access for both receiving information and delivering information to the public and that they want that. In fact, I don't think we are attempting or beginning to provide something that they will consider to be either a frill or unnecessary. It's the response we had from the two public involvement workshops where we had over 200 people at the Brandon workshop and over 200 people at the Winnipeg workshop representing school boards, administration, teachers and parents from almost every school division in the province. It is clear that the question of: (1) public involvement in education, and (2) access to information by the public and an opportunity to provide feedback on critical areas of interest to them, has a high priority on everybody's list.

MR. G. FILMON: Well, Mr. Chairman, I think there's a difference between the public's right to know and setting up a self-serving propaganda machine to disseminate information to the public that gives the Minister a higher profile, makes the department look better, and I think we ought to get right down to the specifics. We're talking about \$300,000 in expenditure,

and I think that if the taxpayers knew that they were spending \$300,000 to set up a machine for the Department of Education to disseminate information, they might think twice about whether or not this is indeed the kind of priority that the Minister describes it as.

So, what I would like to know specifically is: Who was doing the functions that are going to be performed by this department now. Who was doing it previously? In what way does this branch relate to the activities of the Information Services Branch? What responsibility will they have, for instance, drafting news releases on behalf of the department? What is the salary of the director of this branch, to begin with?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, I will begin to address a number of points made by the Member for Tuxedo. To comment on his point about the \$350,000, I think the point I tried to make in my opening statement is that the original staff and the dollars were there for the same function. In fact, there is \$77,000 less; so the money that was in operations that was covering the activities of the people that were doing the job has not only not been increased but has been decreased. So what I am saying is that we are giving them more work, a much bigger mandate and task, and they're not only not getting more money to do it, but they are not getting as much money to do it as they did last year.

I also would like to comment on his suggestion, the \$300,000 range, and suggest that we are spending close to \$700 million on education in the Province of Manitoba. To think that one of the services and activities that is of more public interest and greater public concern than almost any other activity that government undertakes, because the decisions that are made affect both the quality of education and the teaching and development of our children, which is of great interest to everybody, surely that amount of money out of the tremendously large amounts of money that are being spent, to explain such a really complex system that has so many issues that are of concern and interest to the community is not extraordinary or indefensible.

MR. G. FILMON: Well, I appreciate the Minister's remarks, but she has answered none of my questions. I asked at least four there, none of which were answered. It had to do with the relationship between this branch and the Information Services; it had to do with the salary of the director; it had to do with responsibilities for doing news releases; and it had to do with the major functions of those people. But I have to respond to what she said about saving the taxpayer dollars by having all of this done by people who were already in place. I have to remind her that the people who were in place were part of the Field Services unit of this department. They were not a Communications section whose responsibility it was to do this kind of propaganda activity. They were doing a different function.

She told the public, and her Premier went on record as saying, that by disbanding the Field Services unit last year, they saved the taxpayer over \$400,000.00. I have it in writing in an article from the Winnipeg Free Press. That is blatantly false; that's an absolute lie, because part of it was transferred into this area and

it appears under the Communications item of this Budget. Part of it, I presume, was transferred into Regional Services, but I will get some confirmation of that because that was part of the functions that were being done for that department. We are being saved absolutely nothing. We are having something done now that I believe requires an explanation and a further expansion as to what role it has in relation to Information Services. Who's responsible for the news releases that go out of her department? Is that part of the function of this area? What's the salary of the director? Let's get down to some specifics and get off all of the fancy Dan remarks that are being made.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, I don't have the information right now on the salary of the director, but we have asked that that information be brought to us as quickly as possible. I should have addressed that; I wasn't trying to avoid it, and will provide that information as soon as we have it.

What was the other question that I missed?

MR. G. FILMON: Are they responsible for news releases? How do they relate to Information Services?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Yes, they will be responsible for news releases.

MR. G. FILMON: Why, Mr. Chairman?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Because the government has a number of ways of getting information out to the public. Press releases on programs and on major activities of the department is certainly one of the legitimate ways for a government to communicate with the public.

MR. G. FILMON: Will there then be a corresponding reduction in the staff of Information Services now that they are no longer responsible for performing this function on behalf of the Department of Education?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: It's difficult for me to answer that question and be absolutely confident of my answer since that department isn't under my jurisdiction and it's awkward to give an answer related to somebody else's area of authority, but I believe there will be reductions.

MR. G. FILMON: Mr. Chairman, the reason I'm being so insistent on getting the information is that this kind of function has a lengthy history. I was the Minister responsible for Information Services at a time when various departments in the government decided that they ought to have a communicator working for them. At that time, this Minister's colleagues, when in opposition, took great exception to that function being performed by individual communicators with various departments. In virtually every case, the communications section of each department was set up with one principal communications person who was in the habit of drafting news releases and information dissemination to the public, and perhaps a clerical staffperson along with it.

At that time the Minister's Leader, the now Premier of the province, took grave exception to that sort of

communications function being set up in individual departments. He indicated that this was nothing more than a propaganda machine. He said that if he were in government that he would get rid of those propagandists; that he would ensure that Information Services was the sole area responsible for disseminating information and communicating with the public; that he would not allow individual departments to have their own propaganda machines. I'm using his words rather than mine because he termed them as propaganda people. Now we have this Minister, overnight, within one year, setting up a propaganda machine to the extent of \$300,000.00. I say that she is not being true to the principles that were held forth by her party in opposition, by her Leader in opposition. I think she has to give us a considerably greater response and justification for this.

I want to know what these people are doing and if they are going to be writing news releases, then I want to know if this means that we are now abandoning the concept of a central Information Services Branch and turning it over individually to departments so that Ministers can have greater control over what goes out. We are really now politicizing the Information Services, the communications function of this government. Is that what's happening, I'd like to know?

MR. CHAIRMAN, P. EYLER: Madam Minister.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: No, Mr. Chairman, that is not what's happening. I'd like to reiterate what I said a few minutes ago and that is that the \$300,000 that we're talking about, is money that was in the Budget during their entire term or the proportion of it; that money was in there to provide the same services that are going to be provided by the people that are there now for the same amount of money.

In other words, we've got the same dollars that were in a number of previous Budgets, that were there for the purpose of providing information to the people of Manitoba, some of whom were in the field and some of whom were in the organizations, on important educational matters. The money has not been increased. The activities that they were previously undertaking are still going to be done including an expansion, particularly in the area of information to the public. We are going to take the same dollars that you were spending to do the things that you were doing that we're continuing to do, and we're going to open up the Department of Education to provide more access for information to and more information from the Department of Education about major issues of concern to them. We want to tell the people of Manitoba and the taxpayers of Manitoba about what regulations there are, what criteria there are, what procedures there are that affect them, like school closure guidelines; what programs there are that they have access to only if they know about the regulations. An example is that there are some areas where people are entitled to apply and request certain programs like language programs that if you do not know about it, do you have the right.

We have to recognize that in a complex system like this that if the public is not adequately informed about (1) the programs and (2) their rights and (3) the structure and how the organization and the system works, they

in fact do not have access; do not have the rights; do not have the information that they need to have in order to make sure that they get involved and get programs they want for their children that they're entitled to but they may never see if they do not have that information.

I believe that the education system, above all other systems that government provides, must do everything it can to open up its department and its people and make the information available. I can tell you clearly, Mr. Chairman, that the information we are talking about is about programs that exist; about regulations that exist; about policies and procedures and guidelines that are in place and can in no way be categorized as propaganda but, instead, is basic information about what is going on and what is available in the education system that they are entitled to and I believe that we should be providing.

MR. G. FILMON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister has given us a number of pieces of information, one being that the statement made by implication, the statement made by her Leader, the Premier, about saving \$400,000 by getting rid of the Field Services was not true, because we're now finding that that's the justification for moving into another area and transferring the SMYs and the Budget appropriations into another area. But just so she'll understand what I'm getting at, I will read to her the questions posed by her leader from Page 1299 of Hansard, Tuesday, March 3, 1981, because perhaps when I put them in his terminology, they'll be easier for her to understand and respond to.

"Mr. Howard Pawley (Selkirk): Mr. Chairman, to the Minister." He was speaking to me at the time. "Can the Minister define for us the responsibilities of the communicators insofar as the high-priced communicators relate to the work that is being done in Information Services? For instance, what kinds of press releases are issued by the high-priced \$30,000 communicators . . . " I'll pause there, to indicate that I believe that the director's salary will be indeed much more than \$30,000.00. He carries on, ". . . and what kind of press releases are issued by personnel working within this Department?"

"Mr. Chairman, back to the communicators, as the Minister refers to them. I would sooner refer to them as the propagandists. Can the Minister describe for us the kind of press release, communicator, or department propagandist releases in relationship to the kind of press release an individual within Information Services releases? It's my understanding, Mr. Chairman, that indeed the defining of the actual function of the communicator in relationship to a writer in Information Services, has not yet been defined by the Minister. Where does one commence, where does the other start?"

We're faced with exactly the same questions that I am posing to the Minister. We haven't defined the responsibilities of at least two of the staff members and we want to know what their relationship is to Information Services, what they're being paid, what their functions are and how does she justify them. That's what her Leader, the Premier, said two years ago in debate on Estimates and I want to know the same information from her.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, I have the information requested about the range of salary. The salary range for that position is \$33,597 to \$43,175 and the specific salary is \$34,944.00. It is being filled by a person who was previously working in Information Services and his position, I don't believe, has been filled.

MR. G. FILMON: The Minister has indicated that there will be a wide range of services being provided for by this Communications Branch and among them will be drafting and preparation of news releases, something that was heretofore a responsibility of the Information Services Branch, solely, and I would like to know, because I now refer to at least one specific release that was prepared on behalf of her department within the past year, I would like to know some information about that news release.

It has to do with the Minister's report on the first year of the Small Schools Grants Program. It is a release dated November 26, 1982 and it quotes the Minister on a number of different items in support of the Small Grants Programs, in justification of the Small Grants Program. It says such things as, "The response from the field has been very enthusiastic, says Education Minister, Maureen Hemphill."

Then it goes on to give solicited comments from various people who were the recipients of these grants and in one case it says, "We have recently implemented a community service to run accounting and word processing for small businessmen in Treherne and Glenboro. That was made possible because we could buy sophisticated computer hardware and software through the Small Schools Program," etc. etc., "says Mr. Cummings." It goes on to say, "We're small but mighty, says teacher Joan Charles of her 26-pupil school." She is commending the program. It says that, "It couldn't have been done without it," and so on.

I want to know whether the Minister feels that that kind of third party testimonial has any part in legitimate news releases on behalf of this government.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, what I can say is that in terms of the kind of question that the Member for Tuxedo is raising about the kind of information that is going out from Information Services, is that it is very important that we stop working in isolation in the Legislature and in the Information Services Branch, where what happens is that we grind out information from a Minister's office or a little dark room downstairs, totally ignoring what is going on in the field or the feelings of the people in the field, or information that is coming from the field about programs that are being brought in.

In this case, I think that the decision was to actually go out - I think this is something we have to do more often, all of us - is go out into the communities and talk to schools, teachers and principals about the programs that are going on and the public and say, how is it working? What is happening? I mean, surely that's a better source of information than getting the information from us about the effect in the field.

I suppose the fact of the matter is, Mr. Chairman, that in this case the program that is being discussed is a program that is so popular and so well received

and doing so much that you can't find a negative comment on it anywhere you go. It doesn't matter whether they're talking to students or teachers or school trustees or parents, where the Small School's money has gone into that school, they know about it and they have very strong - I mean I have just dozens of letters that say, thank you, because this is what we've done with the money.

In fact, the information that was put out was accurate. The information that was put out came from the field. The information that was put out came from individuals who had direct knowledge of the program and on that basis, I don't know what we have to apologize for.

MR. G. FILMON: I think, Mr. Chairman, that Madam Minister has to apologize for soliciting favourable comments about her program in order to sell it to the public because in speaking with some of the people who made the comments in the news release, they were definitely solicited. They were asked to put their comments in writing in order that this would be of use to the department for evaluating their program, not for utilizing as a testimonial to justify the program by the department, but I won't tell the Minister that I disagree with her. I'll let her own colleagues tell her that they disagree with her, because that is precisely the major argument that her colleagues put forward in arguing about the politicization of the use of Information Services in the past for politics; for utilizing third party references and testimonials.

I'll read it back to her because I have it in front of me. We have debate put forward in this House on the 3rd of March again, 1981. It was a very interesting evening. I must say that I'm enjoying reading it back as we have this discussion.

Mr. Saul Cherniack, the then Member for St. Johns, and he is talking about this very item, this very type of item. He says, "I ran across the latest News Service Bulletins and I leafed through it and this is one I find and the Minister of Fitness is present, so here is the report dated February 27, 1981, which reads: Manitoba Marathon 3 is to receive \$12,800 from lottery funds for this year's operation as announced by the Fitness, Recreation and Sports Minister, Bob Banman," and he said, "Once again we encourage Manitobans to participate in the marathon and to engage in training for physical fitness activities. With over 4,400 participants it is one of the biggest fitness events of the year blessed with community spirit."

And Mr. Cherniack said, "I accept that, Mr. Chairman, I believe that is a factual report of what was said by the Minister of Fitness in order for it to be printed in this bulletin. I don't know that he made the speech anywhere, but that is the practice and it's acceptable to me that it's in quotes. It it presumed that he said it and therefore it's reported, but then the next paragraph makes me wonder.

"The next paragraph says in quotes: Without government assistance we'd be in dire straits, said Race Director Matthew Quinn. Again, quote: We make good use of the lottery money. It helps us to defray massive printing and mailing costs as to entry forms. It also enables us to get things done that we would normally not be able to do.

"Now, Mr. Chairman, this is propoganda. I believe that when the Minister makes an announcement of what

he's doing, that's a legitimate news release. But when then we get printed the response by the recipient praising the government for whatever it did, that becomes propaganda. It's not as blatant as that being done by other departments but . . . ,” and he goes on.

Now, I'm just repeating to the Minister that her party, when in opposition, felt that this type of news release was propaganda and, in fact, urged that it never be allowed to be done through the Government Information Services. I'm wondering if one of the reasons why the Minister is setting up her own Communications Branch is so that she doesn't have to answer to Information Services for utilizing this kind of propaganda to her benefit as a department and personally, as a Minister. Is she now trying to do an end run on Information Services so that she doesn't have to put up with the normal constraints that might be placed on Information Services and she can use it to whatever extent she is willing? Is that the reason we now have this department?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: No, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for La Verendrye.

MR. R. BANMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On the same topic. I wonder if the Minister could inform the House whether or not Information Services expressed any concern over that particular news bulletin or new service that was put out, which quoted third party quotations and had to do with the Small Schools Program Upgrading Grants?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Not to my knowledge, Mr. Chairman.

MR. R. BANMAN: So the Minister is saying that the news services did not object to that type of information going out? Now, Mr. Chairman, that is very interesting because I have to say, as the Minister who was responsible for the press release which the Member for St. Johns took such great exception to and made several speeches about, the Information Services Branch, I might say, before the Member for St. Johns had spoken on this, notified me and said that those third party type of news releases would not be tolerated by Information Services because they thought it was a little too political, too. Now we have the Minister over here a short while later, and I go back again somewhat, Mr. Chairman, in that I might point out that after that there were no such releases put out, even though we did have certain communicators within each department that were helping the Minister.

But we've got a situation here now, Mr. Chairman, where the members opposite seem to have been speaking out of both sides of their mouth. On the one hand when they were in opposition they chastised the then government for that type of news service and that type of news release. Information Services told me, Mr. Chairman, that that was not the type of service that they wanted to perform and therefore would not do it. This Minister says, however, that they didn't say anything to her about this type of service and yet I know, for a fact, that most of the staff, the head people out there, are still the same people.

Now, is the Minister telling us that the guidelines have been changed for Information Services? Have they been loosened up to allow this type of - in the Member for St. John's words - propaganda to take place, because it's not our terminology.

Mr. Chairman, it should be pointed out very very clearly and very distinctly the now First Minister of this Province, when he was in opposition, chastised the then government at great lengths for hiring additional communicators, for putting people in departments. He said it should all be centralized, it should be under one controlled agency.

Here, today we see a \$300,000 Communicator Service or Information Service being established by the Minister of Education, who has admitted today that she will be writing her own press releases aside from what Information Services does. So the First Minister again has lost control of something that he said he was going to do. A short year-and-a-half later we see this government starting to crumble and starting to deviate from the major principles and concerns that they expressed when they were in opposition. I say to the members opposite that you'd better get your act into order, you can't have it both ways. You keep using that phrase when talking about government expenditures and government programming, but what is happening here, is that the First Minister has definitely led the people of Manitoba down the garden path with regard to this particular item.

When he was in opposition he spoke on the one side of his mouth - now that he's in government we see what's really happening. We've got \$300,000 and the Minister of Education's Estimates, Mr. Chairman, which she is going to now produce press releases in her own department, having nothing to do with Information Services. So what is happening here, Mr. Chairman, is that we have seen another example of this government saying one thing in opposition, doing anything they can, saying anything they want in opposition, and then when they get into government, well, we're there now, we can do as we please and we'll continue to do jolly well what we want, and that's what we see happening here.

We have the Minister admitted today, No. 1, she's going to put press releases out, aside from Information Services; No. 2, that Information Services - and I have to say to the Minister - I will be pursuing this further with the Premier, because if this is the case that the Information Services did not raise objection to this, then there's something pretty rotten in the State of Denmark here, because what has happened is that they have gone ahead and used some methods - and I won't elaborate on that right now - to try and muzzle some long-career civil servants in regard to this, because there has been a distinct change of attitude, not by the department or anything, but by the civil servants that are involved because they had certain principles that they adhered to when we were government and something has happened that has switched them on a different path right now and I'd like to know what that is.

So I say to the Minister that even though she touts that this is going to disseminate more information to people and the Department of Education has to do this because they got such a big Budget and \$300,000 really isn't that much, I say to her, that in many instances the people out there aren't as naive and aren't as gullible

- as the Member for Sturgeon Creek says - as she would sometimes like them to think they are. Maybe being a rural member we have a little closer contact with our rural constituents than the members in the city do, but I want to tell the Minister that if I have a constituent that has a concern with regard to the Department of Education they'll very often call me and say, well, who should I talk to, and I say, why don't you call such and such a person, that's the person who's in charge of that particular thing, or why don't you call your school board trustee, or I refer them to the government department that's in place.

I do not really feel after all the things they said when they were opposition with regard to communicators and the propaganda machines being set up, that this is a proper way to spend taxpayers' money - \$300,000 on a propaganda machine that's now going to turn out her own press releases leaving aside the Information Services, a director who's going to make \$34,000.00. My goodness, the now Premier just raised all kinds of Cain when we talked about hiring somebody for \$28,000 as a communicator. What does he do? He goes around and hires one for \$34,000 now, \$34,000.00. Now that's what I call cutbacks, Mr. Chairman. That's what I call cutbacks, \$34,000 - that's repriorization, the Member for Tuxedo says, and that's absolutely right.

Well, this First Minister if finding out that a lot of these things that he was going to do and that he was going to put into place really didn't turn out the way he thought.

I suggest to all members opposite that the people out there in Manitoba are starting to see where this straw house is going to get blown down, because they are not living up to their commitments; they are not living up to the speeches they made when they were on this side of the House. That's going to come home to haunt them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Tuxedo.

MR. G. FILMON: In view of the fact, Mr. Chairman, that news releases are now going to be prepared, among other things, by the Communications Branch of the department, what will the role be of Information Services with respect to this department now?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, since that the Member for Tuxedo is asking me a question about a branch or a department that is under the direction of somebody else and not under my direction, it's difficult for me when my Estimates are up, to respond to what is going to be done by another branch or department.

MR. G. FILMON: I'm sorry. I'm asking in the vein of communications, will the Information Services Branch be doing anything for her department?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, I think that the services provided by the Information Services Branch that are going to be provided to all departments will be available also to my department, and we will use whatever services are there for our provision.

MR. G. FILMON: What services will those be, if you're now going to do your own news releases and dissemination of information?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, I think, once again, it's difficult for me to provide the specifics about the provision of service from another department or agency that is not under my authority. What I did say and continue to say, is that we will have access to the same services that are going to be made available to any other department and will so use them.

MR. G. FILMON: Will the Information Services Branch have to okay any news releases that come out of the Communications Branch of the Department of Education?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Not to my knowledge, Mr. Chairman.

MR. G. FILMON: Mr. Chairman, this is unbelievable because just last year, the Premier, in justifying why the Information Services Branch was going to be taken under his wing, and the Executive Council Office, the Premier's office, said that it was so that there would be some central screening and correlation of all information releases from this government. He said that I believe the Secretary of Cabinet would have an override - or at least, no I'm sorry - Mr. Dan O'Connor, his special assistant. He said that in the House, under questioning from me, that Dan O'Connor would have to approve all news releases.

Now we have the government going off 180 degrees in the opposite direction, decentralizing, giving everybody their head and allowing them to operate their own separate communications section. This is absolutely unbelievable. This is not just for the Minister's sake because she has obviously been given her authority by the Premier. But I find the actions of this government as a unit to be totally reprehensible and totally unexplainable.

Mr. Chairman, we are on an area that I believe needs a great deal more information. The Minister indicated that they had hired a director, and that there were two information writers in place, I think, or about to be hired and two secretaries. Now, can the Minister indicate whether or not any of these five who are in place have been transferred in from the Field Services Unit of her department, the former Field Services Branch?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Just one secretary, Mr. Chairman.

MR. G. FILMON: Mr. Chairman, why were others not transferred in if they were performing a similar function and it's now just really part and parcel of the same function?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Is the question, why were others from the Field Services Branch not transferred in? I said we have three individuals from Information Services who were providing the same work and activity as undertaken previously with the same dollars. I'd just like to reiterate that this is not 300,000 new dollars, but \$300,000 that we used last year and they used in the previous years to carry on the same activities that have performed for a number of years.

The other positions that make up the total were staff positions from field officers' branch but only one of them has been filled with a person from Field Services, which is a secretarial position.

MR. G. FILMON: Did the Minister not tell me earlier that the functions or many of the functions, or some of the functions that are being done by this branch were previously being done by the Field Services Branch?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Some of the functions, and the Field Services Branch have many functions, the individuals have many functions.

MR. G. FILMON: Well, if that's the case, why weren't more people from Field Services Branch who were responsible formerly for these functions transferred into this area?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: I would think largely because we dealt with the individuals in Field Services Branch on an individual basis, as I'd indicated to the Member for Tuxedo before when we were talking about the Field Services Branch. The decision on what would happen to each of the individuals was made in concert and in conjunction with both the MGEA representatives, the individual person being involved in the decision, and members of my department and the decisions that they made regarding where they would go, had to do with what their skills and interests and activities were, related to the changing activities of the department in certain areas and their wishes to be either moved into the Regional Services Branch, which is the department where support services to the field will be continued, because we have never at any time said we were ruling out or taking away support services to the field. We have always said that we were going to increase the services to the field, but in specialized areas. Where the people rolled over is where they were doing work that was going to continue, like the two northern people, the person who did the examination of the private schools, and the small schools person who was previously there, and that the others have decided to take on different positions or to retire.

So to suggest that there was an individual in Field Services who wanted to or moved into this as a major area of activity, I could only say that each of the decisions were made with the individuals available and I believe that what they ended up doing is a combination of their skills, their abilities, the needs of the department, and the number of options that were available to them, including early retirement.

MR. G. FILMON: What portion of the SMYs from the former Field Services Branch was transferred and what portion of the Budget was transferred into this Communications section, and what portion of it was transferred into the Regional Services?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: About one-sixth was transferred into here.

MR. G. FILMON: How much was transferred into Regional Services?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Approximately one-half to Regional Services, Mr. Chairman.

MR. G. FILMON: So in this area we can assume that if one-sixth was transferred in, that would be about three SYs and \$100,000 or something like that?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: I think I said previously it was four SMYs, three professional and one secretarial.

MR. G. FILMON: Approximately dollars?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Approximately \$125,000, Mr. Chairman.

MR. G. FILMON: How many SYs were transferred into Regional Services and approximate dollars?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Approximately 10 SYs and \$375,000.00.

MR. G. FILMON: Where were the remaining three SYs - I believe there were 17 in total and it should be about 300,000 more - where was that transferred then out of Field Services?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Two went into Administration and Finance and one into Instructional Media Services with the dollars attached.

MR. G. FILMON: In other words, there was no dollar saving by the removal of that Field Services Branch and that the Premier totally misled the public when he made that statement in the newspaper last fall, saying that there would be a saving of \$400,000 by that move. Mr. Chairman, I'm absolutely astounded. This is a reprehensible kind of information to bring out in the Estimates Review, but we have had it demonstrated again that you cannot rely on the Premier to give any kind of information that is honest and factual. He once again is in a situation where he has gone on public record as stating something that is totally insupported by the facts of the case. I regret very much that this Minister has to sit there and be embarrassed by this kind of questioning because of some statements made by her colleagues, and principally the leader and the Premier of this province. It's unbelievable that that kind of situation should come out and I regret that this Minister has to be put through the ordeal of answering for her Premier.

I revert to the topic of the four SYs that were transferred out of Field Services, the four SYs and the \$125,000, and I ask whether any of those people were given the option to move into this new Communications Branch, other than the one who was transferred?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: I apologize, Mr. Chairman. I heard just a portion of the question and I didn't quite get the total gist of it. I was saying I apologize; I only got a portion of the question and I'm not sure I got the gist of it.

MR. G. FILMON: I want to know whether of the four SYs that were transferred into the Communications Branch out of the Field Services Branch, other than the one person who was transferred, whether any of the other three SYs that were transferred on paper, whether any of the people who filled those SYs were given the opportunity to move into the Communications section?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: The process that we set up in working with the Field Services Branch in total and the

individual, specifically, was to sit down with him, and I think these discussions took place over a very long period of time. There was a lot of direct communication to and with each individual that they were told and given information about opportunities and openings that would be available within the department and had an opportunity to respond on what was available, and they ended up making some personal choices about where they would prefer to work or not to work, as the case may be.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for La Verendrye.

MR. R. BANMAN: Well, Mr. Chairman, I sort of feel at this point in time that I can't let this go by either. We have just heard the Minister of Education say that the Field Services has been disbanded, and what we've found out tonight is that not one SMY; in other words, 17 SMYs were involved in Field Services and she has indicated tonight that those SMYs have all been transferred to different areas within her department, a number of them to this particular item that we're under. The Premier of this province, when this became a rather controversial thing, indicated to the people of Manitoba that this was going to save them a bunch of money. We have found out tonight that by sort of doing a fast shuffle, the Premier hasn't really gotten rid of anybody; he has really just reallocated and transferred his people where he wants to. He's still got 17 SMYs on staff and the monies are still there, so he has not saved any \$400,000, Mr. Chairman. That was not factual. The Premier was not factual.

A short while later, he got up and said he was taking over Information Services, and the reason for that was that there was going to be some central body in government co-ordinating press releases. The Minister of Education tonight says she will not have to take her press releases to Information Services. This is two things in a matter of half an hour here where we found out the Premier of the province, either he's very ill-informed of what is going on or he is trying, I believe, deliberately to mislead the people of Manitoba on two specific issues in this one little department.

Mr. Chairman, I have to say to members opposite that this type of shell game is not going to work; the truth will find you out. And the First Minister of this province better start knowing his facts a little better and start communicating with his Ministers.

Ironically, I have to say to the Minister, she got up to speak here before and said one of the primary reasons for this department was to better communicate with other departments. Yet, when we ask her what's going to happen with Information Services and that, she really doesn't know. Yet we are setting up a \$300,000 department here with people from the Field Services, a number of SMYs from the Field Services, which is supposed to communicate better with the government.

I don't know what is going on here, Mr. Chairman, because I am not in the daily operations of this particular government, because I am not sitting on the Treasury Benches. But surely to goodness, the Premier of this province has to answer to the people of Manitoba why he said there was going to be a \$400,000 reduction and now there isn't, and why there isn't a centralization of Information Services the way he indicated - two things

in one night. It's inconceivable and I think the Premier must, in this particular instance, have lost contact with the Department of Education. Maybe he should sit down with the Minister and find out what's going on so that at least he'll know where some of the dollars that he's asking the Legislature to vote are going.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Sturgeon Creek.

MR. F. JOHNSTON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Some of the facts — (Interjection) — I hear, "Oh, boy" from the non-member from the other side, but it doesn't really matter what he says, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I really am disappointed in what I have heard tonight. I said in one of the debates in the House that the Minister of Education's colleagues were setting her up real good, and she hasn't really realized it yet; she will as she goes along as to what really her colleagues are doing to her.

But regarding this Communications Branch, Mr. Chairman. In the District of St. James-Assiniboia, the St. James-Assiniboia School Board do an excellent job of publicizing in the local paper all of the programs that are available to people through the school system in St. James-Assiniboia. It would be my belief, Mr. Chairman, that the Minister of Education or the Communications Branch of Education would make programs known to the St. James-Assiniboia School Board and they, in turn, would make them known to the public. I also know that the same type of bulletins or advertisements are put out by the school board in the Honourable Member for La Verendrye's constituency, as he told me.

So, you know, what really is this Communications Branch going to do, other than get statements from people about how well the department is doing - which we have seen being done by the release that we have in front of us - and putting out actually what is really propaganda by the Department of Education about themselves, when they should be doing it in the sincere way of working with the school divisions regarding the programs that they have available and letting the school divisions do the work that the elected members of the school division are supposed to supervise and do properly? It would seem to me, Mr. Chairman, that is the way to have it done.

Of course, we go back to the criticism that we've had from the members opposite. I was criticized for getting a testimonial from people on what a great place Manitoba is to live and they sincerely said so. That cost about \$80,000 total, advertising, television, people and all. Now we have a department that is going to spend approximately \$300,000 or \$400,000 getting that type of information or testimonials from people and putting out propaganda about the government and Department of Education.

Mr. Chairman, I really am sincerely sorry that the Minister, who has a lot of knowledge about education and has worked in the educational field and has been a trustee and a chairman of a school board, can go this route by ignoring the school boards as far as publications are concerned on education. I think that is something that shouldn't be tolerated by the Minister. I think that she has to work with the school divisions and let them do the advertising within their area and

she works with them or her department works with them very sincerely, rather than have the school divisions be waking up about once a week or once every two weeks, seeing a brand new piece of propaganda put out by the Department of Education.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, I would like to respond to the points made by the member opposite regarding a specific school division. I have two points I would like to make in relationship to his comments. The first is that this is not, I reiterate again, a new \$300,000, it's not an additional \$300,000.00. It is \$300,000 that I spent last year and they spent in the previous years to do a major job that everybody has continued doing of getting items like the Administrative Handbook, the Annual Report, Education Manitoba, out. That work was being done. It is continuing, and it's being continued with exactly, apart from some inflation perhaps, the same allocation as previously except this year it is less. So let's stop trying to pretend or suggest or infer that we have put in new money to do a new job. We have got the money that was there, that was doing a job in my day and in their day, that is going to now be used to do an expanded and an additional job. So we'll be getting more for less.

The point he made about the St. James Board is accurate to this degree; it is one of the largest school divisions, which says something. One of the things it says is that when you have a very large division and you have a lot of students and lot of staff, you are entitled to get funding for people and often have staff that smaller divisions could not even hope to have.

The St. James Board, being one of the largest, I believe, and I can't say this for sure, but I believe it's possible that they even have on staff a communications person themselves, whose job would be to provide information and communication. That is a luxury that most of the boards in Manitoba are having enough administrative people in your office to carry the task, or to oversee it, that most boards in the province don't have.

So, in the first place, I think whatever they're doing is good. I do not also, accept the fact that if a school division is providing information about programs, which I think it should be doing to the extent that it can, that that gets the Department of Education off the hook for providing information in areas of jurisdiction that are our responsibility, or that are provincial issues, or that deal with policies, regulations, programs, or criteria, or services that are provided by the Department of Education. I do not expect, nor are school divisions in any position to be able to handle that and give out that information.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Elmwood.

MR. R. DOERN: Mr. Chairman, I think there's a couple of points that should not go unnoticed and that is, I guess, simply that one man's information is another man's propaganda. There is a sharp distinction between the two.

I think one of the complaints made by members of the New Democratic Party about some of the so-called information that was being distributed and disseminated by the then Progressive Conservative Administration,

was on the timing, and on the quality and type of advertising that was done. If my memory serves me correctly, the former Minister of Economic Development, he had a program but it just sort of happened that it was just prior to the election. Also the government had a series of advertisements they're very fond of holding up in this House, all kinds of photostats of pamphlets from the last election. But I have in my office on my desk photostats of their pamphlets during the last election and, in particular, the government ads, those full page ads that were put out - the most famous, infamous, most incredible one of all, you're sitting on a gold mine, and ads of that variety. It was the fact that the government saw fit to disseminate this kind of information on the eve of an election and that's what makes it particularly different, Mr. Chairman. You have to examine the content of those ads, the purpose of those ads, and the timing of those particular ads.

The Minister of Education has in her department some SMYs and a Budget and a program that she is, I think, responsible for disseminating in the public. I don't find that very surprising and I think there's a difference in kind between the ongoing needs of a government line department, and the attempt by an administration to get itself elected by spending hundreds of thousands of dollars, just prior to a public campaign.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Sturgeon Creek.

MR. F. JOHNSTON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We'll just disregard the last comments. They weren't relevant, quite frankly.

I would like to ask the Minister, Mr. Chairman, if she is going to consult with the school divisions before she sends any information into the division?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Madam Minister.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: I think that we would have to look at the kind of information that was being sent out. I don't expect to be intruding in the areas of informing the people about things that are normally handled by a school division, but would be looking at provincial programs, provincial policies - these are examples, I may not cover them all - but provincial programs, provincial policies, provincial guidelines, funding available, procedures, regulations that are in the provincial arena, or matters dealing with provincial issues, that we also have a responsibility to provide information on major issues of the day, and I would expect that we would be covering those too.

MR. F. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Chairman, that's what concerns this side of the House. Mr. Chairman, the Minister said earlier that the St. James School Division probably has a communicator. I have no doubt that they have, but they don't have an Information Services Branch as well. They have a communicator that puts the ads in the paper as to what's happening, or what's available from the St. James-Assiniboia School Board. If there are divisions who can't afford a communicator, I'm very sure that the Minister would be only too pleased to work with them, to see that they are able to communicate their programs to the people in the division and let them know the educational benefits

that are provided by that division. I would expect the Minister to do that, but working with the school division. But for the Minister to just slightly evade the question, and give me an answer that says that she may communicate with them sometimes before she sends literature or pamphlets into their division, but she might not communicate with them either.

So, Mr. Chairman, now we have a situation where we have a Minister who has made it very well-known, and that's her policy, nobody's going to argue with it, that's her policy. Whether we disagree with it or not is one thing and we may argue with it but that is her policy and the policy is that she believes that certain divisions are different from other divisions. If that is the case, then the educational policies within the Department of Education in Manitoba, may not be policies that are good for any specific division, or all divisions in the province.

So, Mr. Chairman, I say again, that the Minister should communicate with the divisions before one scrap of information is sent into any school division, and if it isn't, I regard that as an insult to elected trustees, people who are there because people go to the polls and elect them. If that is going to be ignored by the Minister of Education, I think we've got a very serious situation.

The Minister of Education should not mail anything into any school division unless that school division and the people that are elected by the people, approve what is going in there. That's why you have elections; that's why trustees are elected and that's why chairmen are elected from the group of trustees. If you disregard them as far as literature or propaganda that's going into their area, I think we're getting into a very sorry state.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, the member opposite was the one that raised the issue of the St. James Board being quite capable and able in putting out information on programs, and I was responding to what he said. There's no way that I want to let him get away with taking my answer to a specific question that he raised about a specific school division and turn it around to suggest that I am saying that I am going to bypass school divisions in their responsibility and their capability of communicating what they should be communicating to the public. I have no intention of doing that. In fact, a lot of the communication to the communities can best be done by the school boards and should be done by the school boards because they're talking about schools in a community, programs in a community that vary from school division to school division and school to school, and there is no way I'm in a position to communicate on those issues, nor that I am interested in communicating on those issues.

I also want to say that where we are making major changes, there has never been as much, I don't believe, communication and involvement in participation of the organizations including school trustees, teachers, superintendents, of the major issues that we are dealing with, as there has been since this government and myself took office. I want to give two examples where there has been a change in policy by the Provincial Government; the school closure guidelines are one and an announcement that I made a few weeks ago about the changes for approving the building of schools with

the new three-year Capital plan. Both of those were major changes that involved a lot of people where there was full consultation and communication; there were, in each case, changes made in the policies as a result of the communication from those various groups and when they were communicated to the public by me - which is who they should be communicated by because they are provincial responsibilities falling under my area of jurisdiction - we had the support of all of the organizations that were involved and concerned about the policies and the changes that we made, and we will continue that process.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 1.(g)(1)—pass; 1.(g)(2)—pass; 2. Planning and Research (a) Salaries - the Member for Tuxedo.

MR. G. FILMON: Mr. Chairman, earlier today the Member for Kirkfield Park asked about the organization of the Annual Report of the department, and I was endeavouring to find a little bit of narrative in the report about the Planning and Research section and I'm unable to do so. So I'm just wondering how the report is organized, and what is the basis for the information it provides. It doesn't seem to follow the sections in the Estimates.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, I suppose we would all be in the same position of looking - I'm not sure - and I take to heart the point that the Member for Kirkfield Park made, where I think there is the table of contents but not an index. I think that is a deficiency that will be corrected the next time around, but unfortunately there is nothing we can do at this time except a little bit of extra searching, I suppose. I think that any questions the Member for Tuxedo has about this branch, we are prepared and able to answer.

MR. G. FILMON: I appreciate that, Mr. Chairman. I'm very confused as to the organization. I've now found that there is a section on Research Branch which was formerly what it was called and it is on Page 89. But what confuses me even further is that in last year's Estimates, we didn't have Regional Services but we had Field Services Branch, but the write-up in the report is on Regional Services, not Field Services. So we seem to have some aspects of the Annual Report done on the reorganized department and some done on the unorganized or previously organized department. It is very difficult to follow and I don't want to give the Minister any justification for having developed the Communications Section of her department after just questioning the rationale behind it, but since they are in place and since we've just passed that item, I suggest that they have a job ahead of them to do.

We get on to the Planning and Research section and I recognize Dr. Levin - or is it Mr. Levin at the table? - it is Dr. Levin, I'll have to be careful of these titles. I was just watching "Reach For The Top" before we came here for the start of Estimates and recalled Dr. Levin being a star on the team of, I believe it was West Kildonan Collegiate in his day, prior to going on to much greater things on the Executive of UMSU and other things of notoriety; I think he was a school trustee while still a student and other things of that nature.

We welcome Dr. Levin to the staff of the department or back to the staff of the department, as I understand.

However, having said that, I now ask the Minister some serious and searching questions about the Planning and Research Branch. First and foremost, since it is a reorganized branch and one presumably with a new mandate and new goals and expectations, I wonder if the Minister can indicate to us what is the new philosophy and direction that will be undertaken by this branch? What are their goals? What does she expect of them? What will they be doing that wasn't done formerly in her department, and something about the size and mandate and so on of the branch?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, just to give a quick summary. The department has not changed all that greatly to date, except the already alluded to appointment of the new director and his background and experience and capabilities that you have put on record, and we thank you for that. The staff is the same. There are going to be some changes in the work of the department. I think I began to talk about them last year and if I was to describe them in general, I would say that we will be concentrating a little bit more on the Planning portion of it. In other words, there are major issues that are facing us. Computer education is a good example, where we are on the verge of developing computer education programs, have quite a number of them already in the field in quite varying stages of level and activity, and when we make the decisions we're going to have to make about the computer programs, we're going to have to have information on which to make them.

Instead of just evaluating programs that exist, I will just give a quick summary of some of the ones that were undertaken in the previous year. There was one on Native Education; one on a profile of the Manitoba teaching force, a comparison of the years, 1971, 1976 and 1981; a micro-computer project in River East.

I might just mention that the research projects done to date are sometimes done by the department and for the department, sometimes done for school divisions, and sometimes the public. The bulk of them were done for the department. School closure was one. Enrolment, there was a research paper done on enrolment; a comparison of teacher qualifications and teacher assignments, which is what I was alluding to previously when I said we would have information that the member has asked for about teacher supply, particularly in the French Language Programs. That study has given us both interesting and useful information.

So we have tended to use the Research and Planning Branch to do evaluation of existing programs and a little bit into looking at the issues and the problems. I think we are recognizing that it's going to be important for us to have better information on which to make decisions about programs that are either in place or that are going to be put in place, so that we will be studying not just existing programs, but needs. We will be studying needs of the school divisions; needs of the education system, and trying to provide some good solid information on which to make the program decisions and the funding decisions that are going to have to be made in the future.

I might give as an example of that the special needs education area where we have put a large amount of money out into the field, into this area, and have not really gathered or studied enough what is being done with it, the effectiveness of the money and the programs and the staffing that are out there, and the deficiencies or the problem areas. This is clearly an area where you don't just keep putting money into a program - it's a very large amount of money - without stopping to take some time to find out what the money is doing and how effective it is and what the deficiencies are. So I would say that would be one of the major changes in thrust.

MR. G. FILMON: I guess what I'm asking the Minister is - she has closed down one branch and reopened it in a new incarnation under a new title and with a new director. I am looking for a justification as to what's different, and what you have told me is no different than the mandate of the Research Branch formerly. Is this a new branch or is it not a new branch? Was it just a means of replacing an existing structure with a new structure that was somehow more acceptable to the Minister, but doing nothing different?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I think that there is a change and that previously the Research and Planning Branch did very little planning. In fact, I would go farther and I would say that they did - well, I don't want to overexaggerate and be caught up on somebody identifying some little area - I would say they did almost no planning in terms of either issues or programs. So that the changed emphasis from the research was mainly research, and the research that was being done was mainly being done to look at existing programs.

There was also very little effort to look at the issues and problems of the times and to do research that would provide information about program needs that don't presently exist. Like there are two things you can do. You can do research and evaluate something that exists, or you can do research that helps you make decisions and gathers information that helps you decide what to do in major areas or in important areas where you are going to have to make decisions.

So both the research that is being done will not be quite as narrow as it was and that we will not just be doing research on existing programs, but the research capacity will be broadened to provide information to help us make program and funding and policy decisions that have to be made throughout the education system. They will be providing that information to both the Department of Education and to people in the field, I think, when there are supports and information that they need to make decisions that they can't presently provide. The planning portion of it that wasn't really carried out at all, I think, will receive a major focus in our activity.

I think that there is a recognition by most people that the education system is under some of the greatest pressures and is going to require really a lot of careful thought over a fair amount of change that is going to have to take place, because we are a service that must keep pace with the times. When we are educating our children, for instance, we have to provide the balance between providing the basics and the programs that

the public is used to having provided and wants continued with those things that we have to put into the curriculum because society is changing and there are a lot of pressures on children and people that didn't even exist before.

I talk about the - well, I think when we get into programs, probably we can deal with some of those. I lost my train of thought. We can't ignore - I was talking about the difference between sort of basic programs that we are continuing, we can't ignore the technological revolution that is on our doorstep that our children are going to have to live in and manage. The education system is one that is both sometimes in the forefront and always involved to a large degree in any changes that are being made or that are coming about as a result of the society that we're in. We have to start planning for this.

I can remember, in 1975, when I made my outgoing or incoming - I can't remember which one it was - speech as . . .

A MEMBER: They were probably the same.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: No, they were not the same - as the President of the Manitoba Association of School Trustees. At that time, and I think this was in 1974 or 1975, I talked about the importance of preparing for declining enrolment, you know, and I said, this is the major issue of our day and that we must not get caught up in it, but we have to prepare for it and we must make decisions about how we're going to get through it, so we're not dumping this critical major issue on school divisions and abrogating and avoiding the responsibilities of the Provincial Government.

I can tell you that it is clear that we did not do our job in that area. One of the things that demonstrates that the most is the Educational Support Program that was brought in previously, and while I want to give full brownie points to the point that I can about what the previous government did to offset the impact of declining enrolment, the fact that the one element that they addressed this issue was to allow the basic operating units to continue for the year if there was a loss of enrolment of numbers of people qualifying for the basic operating unit. But, you know, that wasn't enough. I mean, it didn't even begin to address the problem. So I identify this as one of the issues that we had on our plate four or five or six years ago, that could have been better handled and better planned for, with less negative impact on school divisions and on schools if that planning capacity, both to provide information and to prepare for it in terms of funding and programming support to the field, had been in place. So it demonstrates the need, I think, for the change in expanded mandate.

MR. G. FILMON: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate those remarks by the Minister and we'll get a further opportunity to debate the Education Support Program and its shortcomings, whether perceived or real. I only repeat what I said to the Minister Thursday night, I guess it was, when we were discussing it, that any program starts from a base upon which certain assumptions are made and a base year, upon which a formula is structured. The further that you get away

from the base year - even one year - you find that the inequities become apparent; and the further you get away the inequities become magnified, because you become further and further away from the base year and from the assumptions upon which that base year calculation and formula was established.

So we will be very happy to debate Education Finance and this government's view of Education Finance when Dr. Nichol's report is put forward, with the stamp of approval presumably of this Minister and this government because the minute it's laid on the table, its inequities and its drawbacks will become painfully obvious. I suggest that no matter how good it is, it will not be perfect. We will have plenty of opportunity to discuss this Minister's views and commitments to Education Finance when she has put her program on the table. So we'll be happy to go over all of that and I will have more under 3.(a) to say about that.

But we are talking now in terms of the role of preparation for future planning and the Minister has said that in 1975, when she was President of MAST, she gave certain directions in her crystal ball gazing that should take place, but there wasn't enough planning capability in the department and in the education stream, at that point in time, to anticipate and work towards a solution that should have been available by now. We shouldn't still be struggling with the problem of declining enrolments, I think, is what she's implying.

Well, I remind her that at that point in time, the then provincial government, the previous NDP Government had something in the order of 55 people employed in Planning and Research in that particular area under, I believe it was Dr. Orlikow, and perhaps even Dr. Levin was involved at the time. Well, if they couldn't, with 55 people, leave in place plans and information, that isn't a panacea. The Minister has indicated, in great detail, that the difference between research as it has been done up until now and research and planning as it will be done is analagous to the quotation that I often recall - and I'm not sure if it's from Tennyson, but it goes something to the effect of - Some look at things that are and ask why; I dream of things that never have been and ask why not. Well, the point that I want to make is that if the planning component is going to look at things that never have been and ask why not, what are these things that never have been that the planning component is going to look at?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Well, Mr. Chairman, there are a number of issues that we can identify now that are obvious, that we're going to have to have a lot of information to help us make the program and funding changes that are going to come about; some as a result of the Education Finance review. We must have a lot of accurate information on which to make those changes, because I quite recognize what he is saying, that we are not able, nor is anybody able to plan a perfect program, a perfect ed-finance system, that they made some changes and they learned from them and we have learned from some of the changes that were made. While we may make some, or there may continue to be some deficiencies or inequities, we certainly can and should improve the major deficiencies that we do know about now, and address the things that are clear, even though we will not be able to see everything at the time we are making the changes.

The other thing I think is important is that we don't fix them in stone, that while the Educational Support Program had the advantage of having a three-year life that allowed school divisions to plan, I think we should always say that when we bring in a program that is major, and we do find problems and deficiencies, that we don't feel that we have to stand up and defend them to the death just because we brought them in; and if we do bring in a program and it fixes up some of the problems, and it creates others; then I'm quite prepared to stand up in this House and say that, Mr. Chairman, and say that there were some problems related to this program that we did not anticipate, or that experience has shown us exist that we did not expect and try to be prepared and willing to change them as quickly as possible to meet those deficiencies.

Some of the areas clearly will be the Special Needs that I mentioned previously, which is a major area of concern to all, largely because we want to make sure that the money that's going in is doing the job; and in the areas where it isn't doing the job, we need to know that and not make assumptions that just because the money's going in that all of our children's needs are covered.

Native education is another area where we clearly have problems that we must address and I don't pretend for a minute to have all of the answers, or the solutions to the serious questions facing us with the education of our Native children, where large large numbers of them never get past Grade 8 or Grade 9. In some communities, we have children where there is nobody who graduates from Grade 12. The drop-out rate, the opportunities, the access for Native children has been an issue that all of us have been struggling with over the years, and will continue to struggle with, and we have to try and get information that will help us make some of the changes that need to be made.

So we don't have them all identified. Some of them we think we have to be flexible enough to not say ahead of time that we know what all the areas are where we need information, but to be able to respond to information from the field, for instance, where they tell us that they have problems and they need information in order to be able to provide programs. So some of the decisions will be made by us, by areas that we have already identified and know are areas of concern that we're going to have to pay attention to, and some will come about through the continued communication that we're going to have with the field about what their problems and their needs are.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Norbert.

MR. G. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the Minister could advise whether or not this branch has done any up-to-date research or arrived at any new or different conclusions with respect to that, I suppose what seems like an old issue now, but closed areas versus open classrooms.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, this is an area where my department has not itself done research in this area but there is a fairly significant body of research available that has been done on the advantages and

disadvantages of closed areas versus open area schools.

It might just allow me to make one point, and another point about the kind of research that we will be undertaking. That is that we should do a very careful review of what research has been done by other bodies, other organizations, and other departments because we don't have either the time or the money to duplicate unnecessarily, research that other people have done.

So one of the tasks of Dr. Levin and his department will be really to identify the information and the research that has been done by other bodies that would be helpful or useful information to us that:

1) We don't have access to because we didn't know it was available; and

2) That will allow us to make the decision to put our money into studying things where we really need information, where there isn't a body of literature or information.

MR. G. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, I have noticed a trend in recent years with school divisions closing open area classrooms.

Can the Minister indicate whether the branch has followed that particular trend, and can she confirm that that is now a trend in the educational system?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, I'm not able to confirm the degree to which this activity is taking place except I can confirm the fact that it is taking place, that there is a movement on the part of a number of school divisions to move away from the closed to the open area, and to begin to close some of these areas.

I'd like to make a few comments about that in general. I've said this before and I think I discussed it last year. But I think sometimes in education we tend to, and I'm prepared to say this publicly and it's sort of a criticism of our system, is that we sometimes jump on band wagons without doing the necessary background sort of research, preparation and work that needs to be done for the branch.

What happened with the open area is that we picked up on something that had been brought in, in the States, where they may have done preparation and work to bring it in but we sort of copied it, and we did it overnight. We didn't prepare our teachers. We all admit that and we know that.

There is a big difference to teaching in a closed area classroom than an open area and people have to be prepared for change like that. So they built schools, they knocked down walls, they opened up the system, and the teachers were put into it. While there are many advantages and benefits of that kind of teaching, they are not demonstrated if the teachers that are in the system don't know how to use it and don't know how to function in it. Peoplesoon realized what the problems were and they began to move to help prepare their teachers to be able to operate in that system.

I think that in some cases they feel they went too far. By that, I mean they may have gone where they had too many open areas and sort of totally gone away from having any access or any closed classroom situations in a school or a division. They found that to be a disadvantage because they went to one extreme and didn't allow options. In some cases, children and

teachers and programs find they're better off in a closed area. Sometimes it depends on the ability of the teacher or the kinds of students.

I have had some parents with children with special problems, learning disabilities, where they tell me that one of the things they know about their children is that they must be removed from things that distract them and they should be in a closed area classroom where the discipline and the quiet can be maintained.

So I suppose they're moving to correct what might have been a move too far, too fast without adequate preparation by the people, particularly the teachers and in some cases the students, to deal with the change and, perhaps, I hope what we're going to get is the balance because I would hate to see - the extremes are bad at either ends - and we don't want, while we recognize the deficiencies and the problems with some of the ways they went about it, to go back and say that open area has no advantages, no benefits, and we must throw it out and now put walls up and have all contained spaces for all of our classrooms. Because in many cases the teachers and the schools say that there were tremendous benefits to changing the way of teaching children and having it a little more open.

So I think there's advantages and disadvantages to both. The school divisions themselves are making the decisions on a school-by-school basis looking at the programs and the teachers and the children on whether or not and just what proportion of their classrooms to keep open, and what to keep closed.

MR. G. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the Minister could tell me what the firm, unwavering opinion and guidance is of the Minister to school divisions on this question?

HON. H. HEMPHILL: Would you give me the description of what I'm . . .

MR. G. MERCIER: Firm, unwavering position.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: I am very careful not to try, in areas such as this, and say that there is a right way and a wrong way. To put myself in the position of people that are responsible for programs and organizations — (Interjection) — and that are responsible for being in the classroom and teaching the children, that there is only one way to go, or only one way to do it.

I don't think there are very many people in the education system who would not say that there are advantages and disadvantages to both of those systems, both open classroom and closed classroom, and that the trick is not to say you must only do one or the other, but that you should look carefully at what you're doing and that having some of both is possibly the best way to go because there are times when it's good to have it one way, and times that it's good to have another.

One of the major factors in its success is the ability of the teacher, that if you have a teacher who has no experience and no background, it doesn't matter how good the system is, they're not comfortable in it and they don't know how to work in it. In that case, it would

be absolutely ridiculous to say to a teacher that you must teach in an open area classroom.

On the other hand, you have teachers who have been trained, and to have developed in the other area, who know how to work as a team, not used to working as an individual in a closed classroom, and who can get what they believe is a better program to children with more help from other teachers working in a team way than they can in a closed, I think those decisions should be made by the professionals, by the teachers, by the local school divisions, and the school boards who carry the responsibility for determining organization of both schools and programs.

MR. G. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, then is the Minister saying that the decision whether to open classrooms or close classrooms and how schools are to be constructed in this regard is a decision left to the individual school board to decide?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Yes, Mr. Chairman, very clearly I am saying that, because that authority is given to school boards under the present Act and they have been doing that job. I have not ever at any time given any indication that that job should not be done by them or cannot be best done by them, both the teachers and the administration in the school and the school division.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Kirkfield Park.

MRS. G. HAMMOND: Mr. Chairman, on the same subject, the Public Schools' Finance Board, because it had so many requests a few years ago to close classrooms, whether they had a policy that was written certainly let divisions know that they were not about to accept open-area schools as such any longer, because too many school divisions were coming and asking for money to close the classrooms, and so whether the policy is left to the school division or not, I think that the Public Schools' Finance Board had something to say in relation to the planning of the schools.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Madam Minister.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, it's my understanding that, and I suppose this is a result of large numbers of requests to close large numbers of classrooms where a lot of money had been spent just a short time earlier in designing them in an open-area way, that there is a suggestion that there be a combination of classroom space, that there be some closed and some open area to get away from going to the extreme and not having any options available in a school that would allow having some classrooms that can be handled in a closed. So, I don't think it's to say that they must do one or the other, but that recognizing from experience that schools seem to need, after they've had some experience with complete open area, seem to be going in the direction of having some open and some closed, that that is the level to which they suggest that they do their planning and that is to have both options available.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 2.(a) . . .

A MEMBER: Committee rise, Phil?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Committee rise. Is it agreed? (Agreed)
Committee rise.