

August 6, 1992

EVENING SITTING

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Expenditure
Education
Vote 5

Item 1

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairman. As we were discussing before the supper hour, we were discussing the student aid program and we got into some discussions on some reciprocal agreements. We're working towards some reciprocal agreements, or helping local school boards trying to overcome the problems they have regarding interprovincial schooling.

A question I had . . . and I'm not sure. I don't think I got to posing this question prior to the break at supper time. What I was wondering, if the department has given any consideration in allowing families to take the tax dollar that they would pay to a local RM (rural municipality) or a local community, that tax portion, and allow families to use that in the tuition portion that they have to pay to send their student for schooling in another province.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, the arrangement I think that the member opposite is suggesting would be redundant really in lieu of the arrangements that are currently in place where the whole tuition is paid, the amount being negotiated or established through the funding formula; and then that tuition is a recognized cost in the third-party grants that are paid by the government, through the department, to the school board, and is fully refundable. So there is not a cost . . . there's not any net cost to the school unit.

Mr. Toth: — Okay, and that's maybe the thing I didn't quite catch and understand before. Are you saying then the parent doesn't have the added cost to that — that extra cost that the tuition they would be required is refundable. They applied at a unit board because the Department of Education would recognize that student's education and would be paying that local board. But if the child is going to school in Manitoba and they have to pay that tuition, is the parent refunded that amount of money?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, yes, this is not a direct cost to the parent. This is a cost to the transferring school division, so that if there were a school division in Manitoba, where the destination of the resident student is in Saskatchewan in a school division, that the arrangements would be that the school division would pay the tuition on behalf of the students so there wouldn't be a cost to the parent. They would pay the school portion of their property tax to the appropriate body and then arrangements would be made with the school division to recognize the tuition.

Mr. Toth: — Okay. Madam Minister, how many private schools do we have in the province to date and do they receive any funding from the department?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, we may want to

ask for some clarification of the question in terms of private schools. There is six historical private high schools in the province that have a funding arrangement, but I'm not sure whether the member's question included such things as private vocational schools or some of the other K to 12 private arrangements that there are. I would need, before I could answer the questions clearly, is a definition of what he means by private schools.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Madam Minister. What I'm talking about, Madam Minister, there are a number of church organizations that have set up their own K to 12 schooling program. And certainly the question has been raised regarding the amount of tax base and the taxes that they are paying, and to my knowledge a number of these schools, the total of tuition cost is borne by the parents or the parent body.

I'm wondering if there are any schools that are recognized or what the criteria would be and if there are any of these private schools that do now receive funding.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, if I understand the definition of private schools in the context that the member is asking, those private schools are not funded. The balance is that they are exempt from local property tax but that they are funded through tuition fees and that they are not funded by the government.

Mr. Toth: — What exactly do you mean, Madam Minister, when you say exempt from local property tax? Are you talking of the facility that they are operating out of is exempt from local property tax or are you talking of the parents themselves being exempt from the educational portion of their property tax?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, no. What it is, is that there is provision in the taxation provisions for property tax for those facilities to be exempt.

Mr. Toth: — Now if parents were looking to and asking, seeking for some financing of the educational program and were asking . . . would come to the department, I suppose the department would suggest that the parents should be approaching the local school board regarding the taxes that they asked and would like to have their local tax assessment, educational portion, available to them to use and the educational facility that they are sending the students to.

Does the department have any guidelines on that or would a parent body have to go, or a group have to go, to a local school board and ask for them to give them that ability?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, these . . . the schools that I understand the member is referring to are set up in co-operation with the school division in which they are established. So the arrangements may vary from one situation to another. And then there is the provision in the taxation portion of the urban and rural municipal Acts to exempt the properties from which they operate from taxation.

But the policies for some of the associate schools, the

Christian schools — for instance, the Valley Christian Academy at Osler with which I'm familiar — those policies are still in transition and have not been fully developed as yet. Because, as the member opposite could understand, there are significant . . . there could be significant implications for the public school system and the property tax . . . the local tax burden for other parents and property owners in the division with respect to these schools.

So the arrangements that are in place at the moment in the various jurisdictions appear to be operating satisfactorily and don't seem to be a hindrance in the establishment of new schools like this. As I noted, there is one proposed for the Melfort area just recently that's being developed. So the transition and the establishment, I think, is not hampered by the current rules. But there is a recognition that because of the impact on the public school or separate school system, whichever may be affected in the existing divisions, that these policies have to be worked out in consultation with the established school system, and that's being done.

Mr. Toth: — Well I'm glad to hear, Madam Minister, that there are some policies being worked on, that you are discussing some alternatives. Because I believe there are many parents across the province . . . And I agree with you that if parents had the ability to take that tax portion of their property tax, the educational tax portion, and transfer it automatically to the school of their choice, you would no doubt find a substantial portion of that funding would indeed go to a number of the private schools. Or there may even be more private schools, as I find that a number of parents have a very grave, great concern regarding the public school system.

And in some cases . . . It's not all areas of the public school system. I think it depends a lot on the working and the ability of the public school system to meet the needs of the students and the wishes of parents. It has a lot to do with the involvement of parents and in some communities parents have taken . . . been very diligent in becoming involved in their school system, becoming involved in the educational system, expressing their views and their opinions, and certainly letting the educators know that they have some values and they have some aspects of education that they feel are very fundamental. And if the educational system, that local district or board or local school, is meeting those requirements, parents are more than willing and happy to leave their students there.

But I would suggest in a number of areas there are parents who are also very concerned that the school is not meeting the educational requirements and the values that they are establishing and would like to have. And I believe that's the reason a number of parents are taking . . . making the choice, even if it's costing them more money out of their own pocket, to send their children to private schools. So I think it . . . I trust the department will take a close look at this.

And I guess I can only encourage parents as well to get more involved in the educational system and let the school boards and the teachers know of the values they have and the reasons what they're looking for in an

educational process.

At this time, Madam Speaker, if you'd like to respond I'm going to turn it over to one of my colleagues.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairman. My colleague brought up the question of student loans, etc. And, Madam Minister, how many student loans would you estimate that you will be receiving this year, applications?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, we will endeavour to break down the figures. We have the numbers for the total portfolio but that would include returning students. So I guess I would ask for some clarification of the member's question, whether he means new applications from applicants this year that are just entering the post-secondary system. If that were the case we wouldn't have those numbers complete as yet because we're still four or five weeks away from the first semester of people that are beginning a term in 1992. So there would be some applications that haven't been received and perhaps haven't been processed yet. But if he means repeat, like we would have a number of applications that would be initiated in 1992 that would relate to repeat students — students that have had one, two, three years already in a post-secondary program that would be reapplying for this current year.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Madam Minister, why don't you give us the repeat applications? How many applications you have received for the summer school program at the two universities and what is your estimate for new applications coming in for students who wish to attend post-secondary schools this fall?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, obviously in preparing the budget, we do have to make some projections based on estimates of students that will be entering the system. And we would estimate that the total number of applications being processed in mid-year 1992 would be from 12 to 13,000, and the number of approvals would be somewhat less than that.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Madam Minister, how many of this number will be repeats?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, that would require . . . the answer to that question would require a slightly different analysis than what we've done. It would be difficult to be exactly precise because we would have some people applying this year for the upcoming term that have been previous students but maybe have been out in the work force for a year and are returning, and that kind of thing. So it's hard to be definitive, but the previous numbers that I give in global would hold.

(1915)

Mr. D'Autremont: — Madam Minister, how many students applied for student aid for the summer semester at the universities or at any post-secondary school?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, it may be possible to break that down but it would be difficult because, for instance, in last year's total there would have been

students who included in their application a projection of their intentions to go to summer school or intersession in this calendar year. So like those numbers would be difficult to break down. We could attempt it.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Madam Minister, I would appreciate it if you could, and any new applications that weren't part of a previous session. They may have had student loans prior to this but at the time had not indicated any intention to attend summer school but have done so this summer, have applied. Would it be possible for you to supply me with that information?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the member opposite for some clarification of his question because, if I understand its current context, to give a definitive answer would take some considerable analysis and also some consulting with the universities in terms of student numbers and the timing of the programs.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Madam Minister, I know that students apply for the summer session of the schooling, because I was contacted by a young lady and I contacted your department about this young lady from North Battleford who was applying for a student loan. A day or two after she contacted me, you stood in the House here, in estimates, and said that your student loan applications were going through very quickly, that you had only a couple of day turnaround for applications, and yet this young lady's seemed to be dragging on and dragging on. And at the end of the time she did not get a student loan.

Now is it your department's requirements that these students find some employment, at some period during the year, before they are entitled to any student loan funds?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, there is no requirement for a student to take a job, a summer job, to interrupt their program to take a summer job. But if they do, or if they have a part-time job during the year, or they have interrupted their program with a semester of work, then that income is taken into account. If there's a specific case that the member opposite feels warrants a review, then we would be glad to take a look at it if it was referred to our office.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Madam Minister, I will indeed bring this back to your attention. But I think that it's important that the people of the province, the students, know exactly how the procedure is supposed to work.

This young lady was to start her semester the first week of July, so she was out of school at the end of April. She had May and June in which to find some employment; she's from rural Saskatchewan; she was unable to find any employment locally. But when she applied for the student loan, she was told that she was going to be accredited as having worked a certain period of time and that she had to have funds based on that period of time. And that she did not qualify because she supposedly had this opportunity for employment and should have generated a certain number of funds.

Now, Madam Minister, is that indeed the case? Do you

have to work a certain period of time to generate a certain amount of funds before you qualify for a student loan?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, much like the qualifications to receive unemployment insurance, the student has to demonstrate and document that they have attempted to obtain employment. And they have to be able to provide documentation that they've made at least three efforts to obtain employment and been unsuccessful. But we don't penalize students income-wise who have not been successful.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So, Madam Minister, as I understand it then in these particular circumstances, that if this young lady can document that she indeed did seek employment for that two months, that she applied at a minimum of three locations, she may qualify for some assistance?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, that would be my interpretation, that if this person can provide that documentation, that she should definitely do that and ask for the student aid department to review her case. And they would be most pleased to do that.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well thank you, Madam Minister. I'll contact her and ask her to do that.

Madam Minister, in the student loan applications, how many do you estimate . . . or how many have you rejected for the coming session or for the 1992? What would be your estimate of rejections as opposed to applications?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Well, Mr. Chairman, as I've stated earlier, for 1992 the figures are as yet in no way complete because we're in the midst, if you like, of the approval process and the application process for the upcoming semesters. So we'd certainly be able to provide a summary for the period that relates to the fall semester, which is what applies to most students, later. But we wouldn't have those figures at this time.

Mr. D'Autremont: — What percentage would you estimate, though, would be a potential rejection?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, the average over all years of the program has been a rejection or a decline, if you like, of applications at the rate of approximately 20 per cent. And these would be those applications where the means test is not met in terms of parental or student ability to make a contribution.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Madam Minister, in the total amount of funds that you supply to students for student loans, has that amount to the individual student who would receive the maximum, increased or decreased or remained the same from last year?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, as I indicated earlier, the numbers of students in Saskatchewan who are attempting entry into post-secondary education of all types is increasing rather dramatically. And the percentage of student loans applied for would very likely be increasing approximately in proportion to that.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Madam, my question is: is

the dollars given to each student, the individual student, the dollars that they would receive, if they were receiving the maximum amount, has that increased, decreased, or remained the same?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, as with the Canada student loan program, the maximum limits, weekly limits and so on, haven't changed but if the maximum student loan amount allowed reflects increases in tuition so those increases in costs would be recognized.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So, Madam Minister, based on the fact that you cut funding to the universities by, I believe it's — what? — 2 per cent this year and 1 per cent next year or 1 per cent this year and 2 per cent next year, the fact that the universities have been forced to increase their tuition fees by as much as 13 per cent, will those increases be reflected in the amount of student loans that an individual student would receive?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, certainly in the long run, if tuition fees are raised and students are in a position where they are borrowing the maximum where the average repayable loan in a one-year program is about \$4,500, the increases in tuition would be reflected at the end of the day in the total amount that the student has borrowed and has to repay. But it wouldn't be reflected by immediate financial burden on the student because increases in tuition are recognized in the amount that is available for a student loan.

So in other words if the tuition fee for a certain course this year was \$300 more than it was last year, the amount of student loan would be increased in a commensurate amount.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay, thank you, Madam Minister. Has the amount of money available to student loan funding increased this year enough to offset the increased costs of those tuitions?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, the draw on the Consolidated Fund is projected to be the same as last year — but I will say this, that that's a projection only, and there is no student that has ever been declined access to a student loan, who was eligible, because of a cap in the amount available.

Mr. D'Autremont: — How much money, Madam Minister, would you project that might be needed in excess of what you've already budgeted for?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, even with a growth in the student population . . . The allocation in the previous fiscal year was budgeted to be 45 million, of which only 42 million was drawn. So this year we have allocated the same amount again so as I say, even with an increase, if there was an increase in applications, that this should be accommodated.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So, Madam Minister, you expect that an additional \$3 million that was in the budget for last year — you're saying your budget is the same this year — will cover the additional costs of tuition fees, the 13 per cent increase in those tuition fees, to students.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, yes, the response is that there will not be a student who meets the criteria to receive a student loan, even including whatever increases in tuition fee there are, who will be declined. Every post-secondary student who meets the criteria will receive the maximum student loan that they are eligible for.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Madam Minister, your Finance minister has given you a budget with which to operate your department. You say that there is an ever-increasing demand on the number of applications for student loans, therefore there's going to be a greater number of students which qualify. You're saying that the amount of the student loan available to the student will increase to take into account a percentage of the increase in the tuition fee. Will you then, based on your information, come in with your budget balanced as to what the Minister of Finance has given you?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, this can only be done on the basis of projections. And the member opposite will realize that the student aid program, the Saskatchewan student aid program, which is a supplement to the Canada student loans plan, was initiated in 1986.

So for people that are in a four-year program, which are the major clients of that loan portfolio, the portfolio wouldn't have really started to mature until 1991, because people that went into a four-year program at the onset would have access to the four years. Then they would have the grace period before they have to start repayment.

So it's been a difficult thing to project until now because the number of entrants have been increasing. The number of repayments have really just started to develop in the latter years.

So now, although we're allocating the same amount to be available in this current proposed budget as there was last year, we also anticipate a much larger number of loans that will be in repayment by people who have completed programs that they started in 1986, '87, and '88.

So while the amount available hasn't increased — it's stayed level — that the repayments or recovery to the plan or the net cost to the provincial treasury will actually be the same or less.

(1930)

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Madam Minister, when I look at vote 5, item 21, subvote 4, in 1991-92, there were \$36.257 million allocated for that item and that is grants to the Saskatchewan student aid fund. This year your estimates for 1992-93 are \$30.566 million. That's a decrease of approximately \$6 million, slightly less than that. You're saying that the maturity of those student loans that should be coming back in will provide you with approximately a total of \$45 million included with your 30 million.

You've dropped your funding from the department by \$6

million. And yet all through the years when your colleagues were in opposition, they were demanding more and more funding for student aid. During the election the promises were for more funding for students to attend university and you've cut the program. You're saying that there's going to be more applications this year than there were previously. The tuition fees are up. You're saying that your student aid will take into account that increase, and yet you're cutting funding, Madam Minister. How do you square that?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, I really have to correct the member opposite. The amount . . . the \$45 million that is available as a fund to draw on, as an estimate, is a non-budgetary item in the very same way as the capital costs of school construction is a non-budgetary item.

It would appear, if you look at '91-92, vote 5, subvote 21, but that is simply a more refined estimate in the recovery in how much forgiveness programs will cost, in how much remission will cost, and the interest's write-down. So, there was an interest write-down program that was available for the first . . . at the onset of the program.

So, it's simply a difference . . . it's not a difference. There's not one cent of difference in the amount that is available for students to borrow. The difference in those two figures simply represents an increase in the amount of repayments and adjustments in the amount of forgivable loans. But there is not any reduction whatsoever, and not any post-secondary student who qualifies under the criteria that will be turned away from a post-secondary institution or the student loan department for a lack of funds.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, thank you Madam Minister. I'm sure that there are a number of students out there that will appreciate hearing that, because when they would have looked at your budget that you presented, they're looking at a \$6 million decrease in the funds available from reading your document that you have presented or that the Minister of Finance presented to us here.

So I'm glad to hear that you're saying there will be the same amount of funds, that no student will be rejected because funds are not available. But, Madam Minister, that will mean an increased demand on your budget that you haven't allowed for. Well, Madam Minister, I'll come back to this one after a bit.

I'd like to go now to the final report from the SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) committee, review committee. I wonder if you would mind giving us the names of those members that sat on that review committee.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, the chairman of the review committee was Stan Green from Saskatoon. The other four members of the five-member committee that is mandated by The Institute Act is Ross Giles from Regina, Marguerite Gallaway from Estevan, Connie Phenix-Burrows from Saskatoon, and Donovan Young from Regina.

Their report was received on July 27 and made public at

that time.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Minister. What was the cost of this review?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, the accounts are not quite all in yet for the committee's activities as their last meeting would have been within the week. We had budgeted a total of \$125,000 for the costs of the review panel and we expect that certainly it will come in well within budget.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Madam Minister, what would the individual board members that participated in this review have received for compensation?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, we can certainly undertake to provide that information. I don't have a copy of the terms of reference here. But certainly the remuneration on a per diem basis for the members of the committee would have been within the guidelines that are paid to boards and commissions in the public service, and of course they would have received compensation for their out-of-pocket expenses.

But there certainly wouldn't be any costs that were out of the ordinary and we'll be glad to provide you with the exact information.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Minister. I wonder if you mind also providing when you provide that information — or maybe perhaps you can do so now — the qualifications of each of these board members to participate in this kind of a review.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, I could do it off the top of my head if you like because these are all extremely well-qualified people in the education field and in the business community as well, which is very important to the relationship of SIAST and post-secondary technical education and the relationship to the business community. But I wouldn't want to be remiss by leaving out any of the long lists of qualifications that all of these members have.

So I would prefer, with the member's indulgence, to provide him with a complete and detailed version, with my assurance that he will be quite satisfied when he receives the answer, that these people were very well qualified for the job.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Minister. For this review were there any staff or any researchers hired to aid the panel members?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, the Department of Education provided some clerical support and support staff, but a very limited amount, to the committee, and they did engage a typist and writer to produce the final report, on a very limited basis. It was a low-budget operation. But there weren't any other external consultants engaged by the review committee, and a very small amount of external staff, support staff, to them.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay. Thank you, Madam Minister. I wonder if you could also provide me with the

names of the board of directors for SIAST.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, we would be pleased to do that. We do have it here, if the member wishes me to read them out, or we certainly could table it.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Madam Minister, when were these people appointed to the board? Perhaps that is included in the information you are supplying me; I'm not sure. Madam Minister, when were these people appointed to the board?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, now that I've tabled the entire page of notes that I have, I don't recall the date. But I believe it was fairly early on in the year. It might have been formally by order in council about February. I think it would have been during the month of February.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Madam Minister, I believe it says here a three-year term, February 26, 1995. So that, I would assume, is when they were appointed.

The previous board, were all of their terms expired, or were some of them released or fired?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, as we stated publicly at the time and in the form of a press release, that we felt that it was required to have — to work in conjunction with the review committee and to establish a new direction for post-secondary technical information in this province — that we should have a new board of directors.

So I don't recall exactly the range of terms that were left in the membership of the previous board. But we made that decision to start with an entirely new board at the same time as the review committee was announced. So all of the terms of the previous board were terminated and a completely new board was put in place at that time.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Madam Minister, I find that somewhat surprising that you would start a committee up to review the operations of SIAST, and at the same time you would replace the entire board. If you're going to review the total operation of SIAST, why would you not have waited until that report came down, to find out what they had to say about the operation of SIAST rather than terminating the entire board and starting from scratch before the report's even come in?

The people who were operating SIAST, the board, may very well have been doing a good job, and it may have been reported as such by the report that you commissioned. And yet you terminated that board before that report even came down. Had you already made up your mind what you wanted to do with SIAST before the report came down, and just used this report as a method to rubber-stamp your own decisions?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, in response to the member, it was quite the opposite. In fact, we felt that the existing board might be biased towards the previous kind of operation and that we should have a completely neutral board in place. So that was why we made the decision to have a completely new board, in conjunction

with the striking of the membership of the review committee.

It certainly didn't represent any non-confidence in the board. But it's to be remembered that there was continuity in the . . . complete continuity in the administration of SIAST, the administration of which is rather large. So we felt if continuity in the method of operations and that kind of advice was necessary, it would certainly be available through the administration.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Madam Minister, you bring up the administration of SIAST. In what terms would you describe that administration?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman, I didn't understand the question.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Madam Minister, you brought up SIAST administration. What terms would you use to describe that administration and the personnel that are in the administration of SIAST?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, the administration of SIAST and the personnel that are there are engaged by the board of directors which is an entirely independent board pursuant to the provisions of The Institute Act of 1987 under which SIAST was established.

I might also add, in response to the previous question with respect to the direction given to the review committee, that the review committee, the chairman of the committee at the time — we made the report public just a bit over a week ago on July 27 — said that, at the press conference, that he had never been engaged in an exercise where he felt so independent because there was absolutely no interference from government or elsewhere, that it was an entirely independent exercise on behalf of that board of review.

(1945)

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Madam Minister, I'm glad that the people on the board felt that they were independent. But in looking over some of the board appointments that we have seen coming up lately, such as the Liquor Board where four or five of that number, either they or their spouses, have been contributors to that New Democratic Party, or when we look at the Privacy Commissioner that was just appointed here yesterday or the day before was a contributor to the NDP (New Democratic Party) Party, it makes us wonder just how independent the boards that you appoint truly are.

But you still never answered my question, Madam Minister, as to what you think of the people that are administering SIAST at the present time. What terms would you use to describe their administration and their capabilities?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, my views of the competence of the administration in SIAST or any of the education institutions of this province would not be relevant because the administration of SIAST is hired, appointed, and reports to the independent board, in the very same way that the administration of the universities,

the private vocational schools, and the regional colleges apply to independent, autonomous boards.

So we have, perhaps, unlike the previous administration, not attempted to influence the decisions of those independent and autonomous bodies. And my personal views certainly have absolutely no bearing or no influence in the decisions of those autonomous bodies and the way that they engage their administrations or run their operations.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Madam Minister, the final report from the SIAST review committee, has it been presented to the employees of SIAST that they may know what is going on? I was contacted by an employee a few days ago, and said that the morale around SIAST was terrible because nobody knew what was going to happen around that institution. Everything was up in the air. Nobody knew what programs were going to be in place. Nobody knew who was going to be hired or fired.

When will your department determine what is going to happen to the SIAST programs and to the SIAST system?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, the recommendations of the review committee have been referred to the board which is responsible for the operations and for any changes in the administration or discussions with the administration about changes that might be forthcoming. We understand that the board of directors of SIAST did hold a meeting last week in which they . . . and I'm not sure what the membership is, I don't have the minutes of the meeting or a formal report from it — but I did ask them, the board of directors that is, to consider the recommendations and to select a team, a management team or an action team to manage the changes within whatever recommendations the board of directors decided to adopt.

This is not within my purview. We haven't adopted the report or any parts of it. We have referred it to the board of directors to, at their discretion, manage. We know that in order to avoid disruptions in programs and problems with staffing, that any changes that the board does decide to undertake in the operations will have to be phased in over time, but that will be within their purview and certainly not at the direction of the ministry or the department.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So, Madam Minister, I'm to understand that this report has been completed, presented to you, and now you're going to turn it back over to your newly appointed board at SIAST to make a determination whether to implement this review as its recommendations are. If that is the case, will people be allowed to make presentations then to that board if they have some concerns about parts of this report?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman — just as within the review process and we have to make sure to define there was a review committee and now there's a board of directors — the review committee was temporary and *ad hoc* if you like. They've completed their work. They've given their report. There will be a highly identifiable action team that will be known, the membership of which will be known to all of the faculty, staff and students of SIAST. As the member opposite will be aware, one of the

recommendations of the review committee was that basically the structure shouldn't be changed; that there should still be a central office, although it should probably be down-sized, which means in their interpretation I think that some of the positions wouldn't necessarily be eliminated, but be devolved back to the various regional institutions.

So we also . . . at the press conference there were representatives there from faculty, from the union representing the employees. Three hundred copies of the report were printed to be available on that day for distribution to any interested parties and an effort was made to make sure that within the SIAST organization itself that there was access immediately, that the report was released by any stakeholders or people that could be affected by any of the recommendations.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good evening, Madam Minister and your officials. I have approximately 9 or 10 short questions regarding SIAST, so I'd think it's most appropriate that I ask them now.

Madam Minister, how much money is expended on SIAST's central administration office in Saskatoon?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, we have a number of figures here but I don't have the annual report or the operating statement from SIAST itself. I have a number here which indicates 2.4 per cent of overhead is attributed to the central office. But I know that's not the number. That's not the right percentage of the global budget. So I would certainly undertake to provide that.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much. Madam Minister, while you're doing that, I'd like to know how many personnel are employed at the SIAST central office and what is the size of this office's total payroll? You may not have that at this time either, and I'd be more than willing to have you provide that to me in writing.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, we did table the annual report of SIAST, and I'm probably remiss in not having a copy of it here with me. Their year end is June 30 and their report was tabled, I think, in July. But the numbers that I have here in terms of, not dollars but personnel, would indicate that there is a total of 251 staff supporting the centralized administration, of which 40 are located at the Avord centre in Saskatoon and 211 are located at the four campus locations.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Minister, I'm interested in things being broken down even more than that. Specifically I'd like to know how many vice-presidents and senior administrators there are, and what the salaries of these individuals are, as well as a description of their roles.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, we certainly can provide names. In fact I have a copy of the list of the people in the executive office, but I wouldn't have the other information that the member requests at the moment. I can certainly table this list of the executive which would be located at the central office, with the exception of the principals that would be located at the respective institute locations. And we'll certainly

undertake to have the rest of the information, at least on a global basis. I'm not sure about the salaries of individual people, but on a global basis, the executive salaries, we can certainly provide that.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you. Madam Minister, I'm hoping that what you will do — and I'm not the least bit interested in individual's names — if what you would do, would be to provide first of all . . . The first question, how much money is expended on central administration office alone in Saskatoon? Secondly, how many people are employed as personnel at that central office, the size of the office's total payroll? And then, not by name, but perhaps by number, the vice-presidents who are employed there, the senior administrators, and you can indicate them by number, their salaries, and a job description for each one of those individuals, please. And if you would, describe how many persons are employed in the administration at the individual campuses, and does their role involve any duplication with the work done at the central office?

I would imagine that most of this information would be not at your fingertips this evening, and I quite understand that, but if you would provide that to me, I'd be most appreciative.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, we can certainly undertake to provide that information.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you. Madam Minister, would you tell this House please whether any of those involved in the administration are receiving benefits such as housing or car allowances, and if so, what is the value of these benefits and how many senior administration are currently receiving them?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, because the engagement of and the terms of engagement of staff of SIAST would be the responsibility of the board of directors of that institution, we wouldn't have that information readily at hand. But we can certainly undertake to provide whatever it is that we can legally disclose.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much. Again I'm not interested so much in any individuals, but I'm interested in the information as far those involved in administration and the kinds of benefits they're receiving, and if in fact there is a specific value attached to these benefits. If you could provide them to me, I would be very pleased.

Mr. Chairman, Madam Minister, given the cuts to technology and industrial programs, I'm wondering if there have been any accompanying reductions in expenditures on administration?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, the budget for the current operating year, and I assume the member is referring to SIAST, was tabled fairly early in the year, early into our term. Our response to it at the time was to approve it but to, in the light of the 3 per cent decrease to the third-party grant that was expended to SIAST, there was one other notable adjustment made, and I'm not sure I have the figures at hand, but it was a reduction in the amount of the rent that SIAST was paying to SPMC

(Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) which partially offset the reduction in the total grant. So they would have had for 1991-92, \$80 million; and in '92-93, a budget of \$73 million.

Then in the . . . as the member knows, the SIAST review committee was critical of the balance between amounts expended on administration and amounts available for programming at the student level. So that will be — and it concerned us as well — that will be one of the areas that we'll be scrutinizing closely in the budget for SIAST for the '93-94 year.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you. Madam Minister, Saskatchewan ranks number one among the provinces in the proportion of post-secondary students that attend universities as opposed to those who attend technical schools. And given the need to remain economically competitive, I'm wondering — this is really an opinion question — do you not find these declines in admissions to be inconsistent with the need to encourage excellence in science and technology?

(2000)

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, indeed we do. And this is one of the reasons why, in the context of all the reviews that we're doing in the educational system, that our very highest priority, as indicated by the first exercise that we undertook, and the first one to be completed with recommendations to us, was the review of SIAST.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you. This is my final question, Mr. Chairman, on SIAST, and then I'll move to another area if that's fine. The estimates state that the province will provide \$70,370,500. Does SIAST receive any additional funding from other sources, such as co-operative training with business, and tuition fees? And if so, what is the value of these additional sources of revenue?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, this information would likely, I think, have been broken down fairly well in the annual report of SIAST that was tabled recently. But there would be numerous other sources of revenue, for instance some of the Manpower, the CEIC (Canada Employment and Immigration Commission) programs. Of course the obvious one is tuition fees by individual students, which represents a fairly substantial percentage of the income to the institutes. Then there are a number of CEIC programs, a number of seats purchased by various federal and provincial trade organizations in specific training programs. And this extends to the regional colleges as well. So there would be a substantial amount.

In the absence of having the report, the annual report, in front of me, I couldn't be definitive; but while the government funding represents a major portion, there certainly are other, many other, sources of substantial income. And potentially, with co-operation and building better partnerships with the business community, there's certainly a potential for more revenue and more co-operation and better outcome for students in that respect.

Ms. Haverstock: — Madam Minister, would you be able

to collate the information regarding the value of the additional sources of revenue, and provide that with the other material that I've requested this evening?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, we certainly could undertake to provide that information.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much. Madam Minister, I'm wondering if you will tell us what the faculty-to-student ratio is at our two Saskatchewan universities.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, there is a breakdown of the distribution of full-time university faculty, and as the member from Greystone will be familiar with, there are a number of categories. There's full professors, associate professors, assistant professors, and other. There is at the University of Regina a total of 372 persons as a total in those categories. And at the University of Saskatchewan there would be 1,036. Those would be full-time university faculty in those rankages.

The student count, although I haven't got the ratios worked out, but there would be at the University of Saskatchewan, including St. Thomas More and St. Peter's at Muenster, in 1991-92 — obviously I haven't got the current year's figures yet — 15,556. At the University of Regina, which of course includes Campion, Luther, and SIFC (Saskatchewan Indian Federated College), be 8,450; this is the total head counts, not the full-time equivalents. So the total full-time equivalents for all campuses would be 24,006 students.

So it would be ... if you take the total head count, which probably isn't quite accurate because that's not all full-time equivalents, but the total head count would be 24,000, and that would be about a 5 per cent ratio of faculty to students.

Ms. Haverstock: — I think rather than ask a couple of other questions that go along with this, I'm going to get to my point. And that is to indicate to you that while in opposition, your colleagues condemned the previous government — endlessly, in fact — for allowing the faculty-to-student ratio to decline at our universities.

Since I was teaching at one of them during some of that time, I did hear these concerns expressed, and of course very much agreed with the fact that there was concern that declining teacher-student ratios would mean an erosion of the education system, and the quality of not only teaching but the quality of learning.

I'm wondering what implications you expect from the decline in funding on the quality of education at both the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina, given how very explicit both of the presidents have been, the faculty have been, and the students have been, particularly when it comes to student-teacher ratio.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, this is a part of, I guess, a much larger question, if you like, that's being addressed in a number of different ways, including the discussions we had earlier about the student aid program and accessibility — the social policy with respect to accessibility of students of all ages to post-secondary

education in Saskatchewan. That's one of the reasons that we have struck, and expect them to start working very soon, the universities review panel. And we want them, and their terms of reference indicate that they will be, addressing these kind of questions. And we certainly have concerns — and I guess that that's where the review panel has arisen from — of very large class sizes, particularly in the entrance years at university, which doesn't contribute to a good atmosphere, and perhaps has an effect on the long-term success rate of students. There are a number of very fundamental problems.

I think that in many ways, and to not be critical of the institutions, that during more prosperous years that we did build up a great many practices, including zero-base budgeting, which means like you just can't carry on unless every year you get more. And we're just simply not in that mode. We know that we can expect the co-operation of the universities with the review panel, in hopes that we can address some of these problems with the paramount objective of a better outcome for students in this province who would attend those institutions.

We also did reduce the budget or the third-party grant to the regional colleges by only 1 per cent, which is less than the K to 12 system, less than the cut-back to SIAST, on the basis that with the fiscal realities that we face, there are numbers of students who simply can't afford to leave home and pay living expenses and have access to the major centres in Saskatoon and Regina. That they should be able to have access to technological education, to the maths and sciences, through the regional colleges at the local level without incurring those expenses.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Madam Minister. I'm actually going to save the whole area of post-secondary education as it involves the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina to a personal conversation with you. I think I would like to explore that, and I don't think that much of what I have as major concerns would be any different from what will be raised by your committee that you'll have looking into this.

So I shan't take up your time this evening and the time of your officials with my comments about it. And you did mention regional colleges which was going to be my next question. I'm wondering if you have considered ways of making the regional college system more effective by ensuring that it co-operates more closely with the K to 12 system in terms of services? And if so, what progress has been made in that regard?

Because I very much concur with you, given the enormous expense involved with university education, the regional college system is something that I think can be utilized more effectively and with perhaps the kinds of results that we are looking for for many, many people and at less cost.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Yes, Mr. Chairman, in response to the question about regional colleges, we expect within a very short time to have approval for and be announcing a review of the regional college system which is mandated under The Regional Colleges Act, very similar to the SIAST review committee.

And we will be asking them, within their terms of reference, to specifically address those issues: is the relationship with the K to 12 system . . . to communicate with the people who are doing the distance education review and the review of the high school curriculum and the relationships of regional colleges to SIAST and the universities and how they can play a fuller role in bringing post-secondary education into rural Saskatchewan.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you. Madam Minister, over the last several years — and this was actually raised, I believe, by the member from Moosomin a bit earlier. If in fact you've provided him with the specifics on this then I'll get the information from him — over the last several years funding for scholarships at our universities has been on a significant decline and I'm wondering how much funding has actually been cut from scholarships and grants?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, part of the bursary program is within the decision-making purview of the university's board of governors in terms of their budgeting exercises. But that concern about this issue and others in the financing and accessibility of students to post-secondary education is the reason that we have established the student aid review committee; to try and look at a balance between the amount of bursaries that are payable to students that are prepared to work hard and that have high academic achievement but not access to financial resources, so that they're not leaving the post-secondary institutions with a huge debt load.

I have some numbers here that indicate what provincial scholarships were. It shows that the increase between '91 and '81 at a fairly steady pace and then in '91 started to fall off again very substantially. And this was in reaction to financial pressures.

But I don't have the exact numbers here — well not in percentages. It fell from 6.8 million in '90-91 to 5 million in '91-92, which is 1.8 million.

But I would like to point out that notwithstanding the universities' decisions to raise their tuition fees by more than 10 per cent and so forth, that the total cut-back in third-party grants of government funding to the two universities at 1 per cent was 1.7 million, which — to both universities — in the context of their total income, their income from tuition fees and other sources and the government grants, that 1 per cent, or 1.7 million, really is a very small amount and is . . . the bursaries are non-repayable scholarships, were cut back in the year prior, more than that.

So I think it points out the reasons why we want those institutions to look very closely at their administration and the way they do things and where the money . . . how the money goes through the institution, through the administration; and why, when there are reductions or cut-backs, that it seemed that they seemed to come at the level of the student and not elsewhere in the institutions.

(2015)

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Madam Minister. I think one of the things we have to keep in mind here is that there are a combination of issues that are being faced at

universities and particularly when it comes to students who stay there for some time and are trying to go through graduate work, and in some cases, post-graduate work.

The issues include such things as a lack of opportunity for employment, not just employment that is out of the university circle but as monies tighten at the university with less pay increases for faculty, faculty actually choose to be teaching such things as intersession classes and summer school and taking on the kinds of things that previously some graduate students were able to receive extra monies for. That's one issue, is that there are far less dollars available to people who are students who are needing to have money to continue in their education.

A second area is that we are getting further and further behind as far as our competitiveness in providing scholarships and research grants, even the kind of lab provisions that are necessary in the natural sciences for people at our universities. And therefore some of our very best students, who are the ones who can compete for scholarships across the nation, are going elsewhere.

And I think that it is really tragic what is happening. In my own case, I was very blessed to be able to have my funding at the doctoral level provided through federal fellowships. And that is not something that is available to many people, given the competitiveness now across the nation.

What concerns me a great deal here is, we should be able to look specifically at how we can ensure that we provide for the very best minds to stay in this province and to be able to let us be the beneficiaries of their education and their knowledge. And that's one of the things that I'm very much hoping that you will be able to address with your post-secondary committee or your committee on universities.

But we should be able to know in this House how funding cuts at whatever level actually are suddenly realized in fewer scholarships and in fewer research grants, and the repercussions of that, particularly when it comes to numbers of people. And I think we should be able to say how many graduate students are actually left in search of trying to find funding after scholarships and research grants were cut.

Because we're here talking about dollars and cents — this is called estimates — but what we're really talking about when we're talking education is the people of this province, whether it's the young people that everybody refers to as our future or whether it's all of us who need to have people with talent and education, for which we've paid, be able to stay here and contribute to our economy.

So I do hope that . . . And I don't expect you to have this this evening, but I do hope that at the next Education estimates that we can in fact hear about scholarships and research grants, what has been done to try to expedite a way of having greater access to monies for people, and knowing the exact numbers of individuals who are affected, either . . . And one would hope that it's going to be in the other direction — you being able to say to me the next time we're here, these were the numbers of people that we were talking about last year and look at how many

more people were able to be the recipients of these things for next year.

Having gone on in that recitation, I'll ask you a question. Aside from Saskatchewan's two major urban centres, the only other population growth being experienced in our province is with aboriginal peoples, primarily on reserves. Given this situation, I'd like to know how you've analysed the future education needs of aboriginal peoples.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, in response to the question with respect to aboriginal education, we recognize this as one of the major issues in this province for the '90s.

We have entered into recently a five-year agreement with the Gabriel Dumont Institute. There have been agreements before, joint agreements, but they were always for a one-year basis, on a one-year basis. We think that the five-year agreement will give them some better permanency and continuity to develop programs and curriculum with Metis content.

We are in the closing stages, I believe, of doing the same thing, entering into longer-term — five-year versus one-year — agreements with NORTEP (northern teacher education program) in the teacher education programs, on the basis that five years will give them a better planning horizon and more permanency to the programs.

I met as recently as yesterday with people from the leadership of the Metis society on education issues for aboriginal people. We are also as a province working with the other three western provinces, the Territories, and the Yukon in developing a collaborative model for developing aboriginal content throughout the curriculum.

Obviously there are some differences because the native peoples in Saskatchewan in terms of awareness through the whole school curriculum and curriculum designed for them obviously has to be different with respect to the Plains Indians and the Inuit in the Northwest Territories.

But we still feel as a group of education ministries that there are ways that cores can be developed and then regional flavours can be put on instead of six different centres re-inventing the wheel. And everybody, every single province and territory represented at that meeting where we discussed this issue identifies aboriginal issues in education and the curriculum as a very high priority for them.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you. Mr. Chairman, Madam Minister, within the aboriginal communities they've identified a particular need and that need is for technical training. Experts in the field of education tell us that there's been quite a devotion of money to educating a cultured people, people who are cultured already, in the liberal arts. And I'm wondering what funds you are making available for post-secondary technical education for aboriginal peoples.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, in response, I'm not sure whether we have a complete summary because

there's a range of programs, some of them provincially funded, some federally funded directly through the education system, and a number of other training programs that are initiatives through the CEIC or Manpower retraining initiatives.

So whether we have a global total, I'm not really sure. We have provincial funding, and I think we're the only province to do this, to have direct provincial funding in what we call the NSIM, non-status Indian and Metis program, which will sponsor about 850 students this year in post-secondary technical training through agreements with the Dumont technical institute and the SIIT (Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies). This year there's \$4.8 million allocated to those programs. This is provincial dollars. It doesn't include any of the other federal initiatives or Manpower training. And this program supports individuals in preparing for academic programs in regional colleges and SIAST. And all Metis and non-status Indians, in addition to this \$4.8 million, are able to access the regular student aid fund to assist them in accessing post-secondary technical.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Madam Minister. I'm quite interested in one particular area and of course that is technical training. I'm wondering if you would provide for me in writing, what programs are in place to help make this training available, technical training available to aboriginal peoples, how many persons are expected to benefit from such programs, and the costs associated with them.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, we can certainly undertake to do that. It is fairly extensive overall. I would just want to make sure to clarify whether the member from Greystone would be asking about just provincial funding or all initiatives . . . Just provincial funding? Okay, because that would make it a somewhat smaller job because there are comprehensive programs that are either federal or cost shared. But we can certainly provide the provincial contributions, and we will do that.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much. I have one last question, Mr. Chairman. Madam Minister, given the importance of science and technology to our economic future, and all of us these days, I'm sure, have been reading a great deal about globalization and particularly the impact of having moved out of the industrial era into the information age, I think it's important for us not only to think of the role of aboriginal people in our province — I think our future lies there — but also the importance of women who are under-represented in engineering and in sciences overall. I think we have a need to encourage a wide range of individuals to enter these professions. I'm wondering what programs are now in place that might help eliminate the imbalance of women being involved in these fields, and if there are none, if you have any intention to implement them.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, when we're addressing the programs and the responsibility to set up programs that have particular respect to the needs of minority groups or disabled people, women, we're generally talking about the responsibility of those autonomous organizations to establish those. There are some but we recognize — and I think it's generally

recognized — that it's one thing to say the words but its another thing to hear the music and we have to do it. So one of the ways that we have attempted to address this is to make sure in all of our appointments to the governing bodies — which is really besides conditional funding of which there is very little — the major influence that we can have is in our appointments to those governing bodies. And we have had, in spite of some criticisms, we have had profound respect for appointments of aboriginal people, at least gender parity in terms of making sure that women are represented on those governing bodies, so that the decisions that are made in funding and programming will have, we hope, a good opportunity of representing the needs of those groups.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much. I do appreciate your cooperation this evening. I look forward to your written responses very much. I'd like to thank your officials and thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was wondering if the minister could please give me a list of all the boards, committees, panels, that would report to her from within the Department of Education.

(2030)

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, I meant to do this at the outset, but I had put it aside because it takes up so much room. I wish to table — what represents I believe — the answers to all the questions posed by the member opposite in the previous session.

On the covering letter there's an indication that there are two questions — a breakdown of in-province travel expenditures and the breakdown of expenditures of boards, commissions, committees and so forth — that we're still working on. This is very extensive and will involve quite a few person hours, if you like. That will be forthcoming and we've noted that it is still outstanding, but I think the balance of the information that you requested, or that the hon. member has requested, Mr. Chairman, is included. I'd like to table it now.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Will that include all the names of all the boards and the people on them?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, what we've indicated on the covering letter of this package is that the expenses related to the boards, commissions, and so forth is still being compiled. But I believe that the membership of the boards and the other information, except for the expenses that the member refers to, was already tabled in the previous session. I'm sure it was.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Minister, I have a few more questions or a series of questions and discussions I'd like to have with you over the Elbow School, of course. And I'm hoping, Madam Minister, that we can count on your help and your department's help to try to solve this impasse that's happening out in Elbow, Loreburn.

And I'm just wondering if you've been . . . how many letters you've got . . . received from the Elbow, Loreburn,

Strongfield area concerning this here problem area.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, I haven't counted the representations. And I'm aware also of a petition that was received and tabled in this House.

What has happened since the last time we discussed this issue in the House is that there have been some deliberations by the local school division in that area. People from the department, from the facilities branch, have taken visits to the field to review the condition of the facilities and there is an indication that the school board is reconsidering the options, let me put it that way.

And certainly we are not attempting to influence the decisions in any way. As the member opposite realizes, the people on the school divisions are duly elected by the ratepayers of the area to manage the affairs of the school division. And we as a department or as a ministry do not interfere with those decisions.

However, we do try to make sure that all the resources of the department, in terms of technical advice, are available to them to assist them in making decisions. And we're continuing to provide that and to consult with them as they request. And we are sure that ultimately the local elected officials will make the right decision with respect to the parents and students in the school division of Outlook.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you. Madam Minister, the last time that I talked to you about figures and what has happened and approved by the department was approximately \$400-and-some million for repairing a roof on the Loreburn School and two relocateable class-rooms. Now could you tell me, inform me what the new plans are that's different than that?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, this has a fairly long history actually. The department had rated the capital project for Loreburn as a priority one project in 1991, in the previous administration. However, that administration did not approve the project to go ahead amongst the approvals in principle that they granted.

However as I say, consultation is ongoing within the school division and with the facilities branch. There was an amount that was approved in principle as an emergency amount at the request of the Outlook School Division and in light of the fact that the project had been rated a priority one by the previous administration.

However, this is the information that I have as of today, is that the whole project is being reconsidered by the school division in consultation with the facilities branch, and I would suggest that we await the outcome of those consultations.

There was \$438,000 was projected to be the total cost for the roof repairs and relocateables. But as I say, that is the amount and the project that is under reconsideration by the school division at the current time.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you. I think I said 438 million, I didn't . . . I meant 438,000, but you understood it because we've used those figures before. At least I had the 438

right.

Madam Minister, what I was wanting . . . if you would explain: what do you understand? I know what they're saying out there. Elbow's saying one thing and Loreburn's saying another, and division board, I understand, are making some recommendations. What do you understand, Madam Minister? Is there new recommendations that they're talking about?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, as I said before, there are internal reconsiderations going on within the school division in consultation with the facilities branch of the department. I think that a definite decision has not yet been taken, and I wouldn't like to comment on it because in no way are we trying to influence a decision of the people at the local level who surely know what is best for the people that they serve.

Mr. Muirhead: — Well, Mr. Chairman, Madam Minister, I know that the figure of the 438,000 . . . you told me before that was the amount that was passed at that time and they're going to reconsider. But this paper that I have here I think it came from you or from your office — it's to the minister's office — I do believe when I wasn't here in Education estimates. But correct me if I'm wrong, Madam Minister, that this didn't come from you, but this is the paper I have in my hand regardless of where it came from.

Its issue is a capital project,

. . . for Loreburn School to repair roof and add relocatable classrooms to accommodate K-6 students from Strongfield, Loreburn, and Elbow.

RESPONSE:

Saskatchewan Education rated this a priority one project in 1991, but it was not approved by the previous administration (as you said, Madam Minister). Saskatchewan Education believes this request by the school division to be a worthy project and will be providing emergency funding in 1992 for a roof repair and relocatable classrooms.

All right then, the background is this:

Loreburn has operated as a 7-12 school for students in each of these towns. Loreburn is the best facility to expand to accommodate K-12. This facility is located in the centre of the attendance area.

Elbow is a K-6 school for students from Elbow and Loreburn. Elbow is a small facility with K-6 and no gym. It is located at the extreme south end of the division attendance area.

Strongfield is a K-6 school. Strongfield is substandard with approximately 34 students, should be closed.

Strongfield School is in very poor condition . . .

The reason why I wanted to read to you because I want to

maybe discuss whether these things are all accurate or not.

. . . The Outlook School Division believes (and we concur) that there is no point in spending any money to repair this facility. It is much more logical to close the facility and send the children the seven miles to Loreburn.

There is little utility in having the Loreburn K-6 children go to Elbow by bussing them past Loreburn. Elbow, consequently, will be left with approximately 30 K-6 children.

The Outlook School Division board is planning to close the Elbow and Strongfield Schools effective June 30, 1993 . . .

I mean this is what they're saying, and this is the notification Elbow's had, that they're going to close it:

. . . effective June 30, 1993, and consolidate three schools into one. From an educational standpoint, this makes very good sense.

There will be pressure from the Elbow Local (school) Board and community to keep their school open. They believe that Elbow is going to expand to become the recreational centre of the province. They have been saying this for years although enrolment in the school has not changed.

Saskatchewan Education has approved this project after consultation with the Outlook Board and after evaluating the Strongfield situation as a significant health and safety concern . . . motions passed by the Outlook Board will rationalize educational programs in this part of their School Division.

In 1990, the Board has requested Saskatchewan Education conduct a facility study of all their schools in the Outlook (I guess it must be . . . mean this if . . . it's kind of blurred here, Madam Minister, but I think maybe for all their schools in the Outlook) School Division . . . The study, with various options, was presented to the Board in August, 1990.

And this is signed by Mr. Brunas.

Now is that the new recommendations that they're talking about, or is what you say you didn't want to discuss, is it something further than this, Madam Minister? After you answer me that, then I want to go back through some of these things and maybe get it cleared up, a few items.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, the member opposite read everything on this sheet of paper, which he has and I have, except the date, and it's June 16, 1992. And there is . . . Yes, there is, as I indicated, some more recent developments and some current discussions that are not concluded as yet. So this would be dated by almost two months now, or at least six weeks. And this

paper, dated June 16, reflected the views and the preferences, and in some cases there's an indication that the department concurs, but it basically reflected the views and recommendations of the local school division.

Since this time, since June 16, representations have been made by parents and ratepayers. In response to that, the school division has asked the department . . . representatives of the department to come out and review the situation. That's been done. Consultations are ongoing. I understand that some of the original recommendations of the school division are being reviewed. And when a decision is made, I'm sure that the member opposite will know the results sooner than I do since it's the area in which he lives. And I assume maybe his grandchildren even go to school there.

But yes, there is other information but not anything I can provide in writing. As I say, it's a subject of ongoing discussions. And there may be some modification of the conclusions that were reached and recommendations that were made in this paper of six to seven weeks ago.

Mr. Muirhead: — Yes, I knew, Madam Minister . . . Mr. Chairman, and Madam Minister, I knew you likely had this paper because I'm not sure where it came from. I got it from one of my . . . from the colleague from Souris-Cannington, and I didn't ask where it came from.

But as far as I know, that the Elbow local school board knows nothing about this yet. Because one of our members, the member from Estevan, was in Elbow just a few days ago and they have heard nothing. This is a June 16 letter and this is almost, this is well into August now. And as one of the local school board members talked to the member from Estevan who was out at Elbow and said they had a meeting in your office and they thought they had a good reception and that things were maybe going quite well. But they know nothing about this letter and I wasn't going — until I discussed with you — I wasn't going to, in case there's something else happening since this, maybe even send it to them, but we'll have to talk about that.

(2045)

But that's been the problem, Madam Minister, that's been a lot of the problem that the school division has not been, through the years, has not been keeping the Elbow area notified — the local board — in the manner that they should be.

And I know that we can say here, I can say as the MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) for the area, and you as the minister, that we shouldn't be interfering there, but I've been asked to interfere and help as an MLA to try to keep their school open. And it has caused some . . . Anytime you ever get discussing and get involved with school closures, as we talked about the other day, it causes a problem. And you've been asked by 400-plus names on a petition to help the Elbow school people. You haven't had . . . very few calls or . . . I've only had four calls totally from Loreburn and one from Strongfield, and between the petition, I've got over 500 letters, phone calls, and the petition, I've got 500-and-some names. Now those will be some repetition there, between phone

calls and the names on the petition.

And they are really an upset group of people in Elbow, that their town is nearly 400 people and they're losing their school. And you can understand that. And all I want is to make sure that all the details are understood by your office. Because I'm going to go through some of them because I don't think that all of the facts are coming out.

In this letter here, for instance . . . I visited at a meeting in Elbow where all the school boards — local school boards — were at, representing Strongfield, Loreburn, and Elbow. This was in the Elbow Elementary School. And the teacher from Strongfield didn't say anything about anything being wrong with their school except something wrong with the heating system, although he was in favour of moving it to the school . . . closing the school down and moving it to Loreburn. And I'm not saying that I'm against or recommending that the Strongfield School remain open. It's not a hardship for the . . . when there's getting low on population there and not many students left in the town of Strongfield, to take them to Loreburn. And I do understand it's a different . . . little more of a hardship to have to take them way down to Elbow. I do understand that, and I'm not . . . I used to get requests for several years, keep our school open, and I done everything I could to recommend to the department to keep Strongfield School open as long as possible.

But it's the perception that's been left that Strongfield School is just an old wreck. And that seems to be what I'm picking up talking to some officials in Saskatoon and, not right in the last while, in the department in Regina, but that's the impression that I get. And it's not that way. I haven't been in the school for the last . . . for a while but I've driven by and I'm told that it's in good condition, so it's just not correct.

But if the people in Strongfield . . . they're not contacting me and they don't want to lose their school but still they're not so excited as the Elbow people, and you can't blame them. But anyway, I just wanted to bring that to your attention, that the school is done and finished and it's a wreck, poor condition, when everybody concerned at that meeting said all that was wrong with the school is just the furnace and it would take about \$8,000.

And it was some of the division board members from Outlook that said, oh, well, you get into a . . . (inaudible) . . . that you get into all these things. Well that's in all schools pretty well and that's not a serious problem. And they had quite an argument about that.

But before I get off Strongfield, I do want to apologize for a statement I said about Strongfield in the . . . back here a month or more ago, whenever we were talking about it. It was June 8. It's a long time since we talked about that — pretty near two months — where I did make a mistake in saying that there was only one business in the town. And I do want to apologize to the Strongfield people because I knew just after I said that that there were several good businesses in that town.

So that's been brought to my attention, that you don't know our town very well if there's only one business. And I knew better than that. So I just want to apologize and

have it on the record for the Strongfield people about that one incident.

And I also want to take this opportunity for a point that I made about the Leader of the Liberal Party here the other night in the House. That's not too long ago, where . . .

An Hon. Member: — Gee, you're apologizing an awful lot tonight.

Mr. Muirhead: — Well a Conservative says . . . Mr. Chairman, the House Leader says I'm apologizing. When it's brought to my attention that I've said something wrong, Conservatives have no problem apologizing. It's socialists that don't know what the word apologizing means. But I know what it means, Mr. Chairman.

And I'm going to apologize in this manner, though. Just not just like maybe you all think. I did make an accusation that the Leader of the Liberal Party sent *Hansards* out to the area, which is all right because I send *Hansards* out to the area. It's just something that one MLA doesn't do to another. And it was brought to my attention, and by the Leader of the Liberal Party, that she had nothing to do with this. It turned out that some individual went to her office in Saskatoon and got the copies from there and made them and sent them out from there.

So I want to apologize to the Leader of the Liberal Party that she had nothing to do with it. Except the copies did come from her office. But I've also been asked by her that said, she made the statement that I should check out my sources before I say statements.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Muirhead: — But, Mr. Chairman, to be fair, when the House Leader tells me something, or any individual, I take him at his word to be right. The same as I took the individuals from Loreburn and Elbow that told me that this came from the Leader of the Liberal Party, that's where this came from.

And so if it turns out for the example I'll use, that if the House Leader or anyone else tells me anything or the Leader of the Liberal Party makes a statement and you believe it to be so, and it turns out that it's not so, who did wrong? Not the person that retold it. It's the person that told you wrong in the first place.

If the House Leader tells me something, Mr. Chairman, if the House Leader that's chirping from his seat, and if he tells me something I take him at his word. And if I repeat that to someone and it turns out to be a falsehood, it's him that give me the wrong information.

And that's why I am apologizing to the Leader of the Liberal Party. Except in doing so — I want to have this on the record — that in doing this for her, I want her then in turn when she says statements pertaining to the NDP Party or the Progressive Conservative Party, then she must check out her sources or apologize also.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Muirhead: — Now, Mr. Chairman, back onto the

Elbow School. I just want to, for the record . . . and I'm going to read some of this into the record then I'll give you a copy, Madam Minister. I don't think the department has this. It's done, it was given to me by the people in the Elbow area.

And there was also some accusations made to me that I didn't have my facts right when I was talking about Elbow, Loreburn, and Strongfield's assessment base. So I have a statement here that I want to put on the record that maybe the people that contradict me should check their sources out. Because I got this from the Outlook school board.

And it gives all the assessments of all the towns and RMs. Now they've got Strongfield is 256,660 assessment, and Mistusinne — which is a park not too far from Elbow so that goes in with the Elbow — and it's 1,068,440 assessment; and the town of Elbow is 1,494,900. Loreburn is only 987,200 assessment.

So if you take Strongfield, 256,260, and you take Loreburn, 787,000 — I guess it is — 200, you've got about a million assessment; where Elbow has almost a million and a half, plus another million in Mistusinne which is in the Elbow area. So we're talking two and a half million versus a million for assessment. I want this on the record, because if this is wrong then the Outlook School Division put out the wrong information.

Now what I think's what we need to clear up — and I'm saying this for the record, Madam Minister, not between you and I — it's the RM of Loreburn, which is seven million, six hundred and fourteen nine, so they think they have much more assessment. But I want to make it clear that the area of Loreburn has . . . the municipality also takes in the town of Strongfield and the town of Elbow and this Mistusinne park there. This is actually called a townsite there now, so I just want to put that on there for the record.

Mostly what I wanted to get into, and as I'm through . . . I only have the one copy, Madam Minister. It's to clear up some of the misunderstandings of what schools are dropping in population, whether it's Loreburn or Strongfield, or whether it's Elbow. And I have it all here very clearly that this is the bus students that are brought in to Elbow. Davidson School Division have 4; Loreburn rural, 11; Loreburn village, 9; Elbow rural, 12; Elbow village, special arrangements, 1. Total bus students is 37. Students from the village of Elbow, 28; special arrangements bus, 1. Total students from within village 27. Total students (a) and (b) is 64. So that's how many students there are in the Elbow Elementary School now.

Then it goes to Elbow Elementary School, 1991-92 school term, enrolment summary breakdown as of June 26, '92, by grade. Kindergarten — they have all the names but I won't read the names out — the total for Loreburn is one; Loreburn rural, zero; Elbow village, four; and Elbow rural, one; for a total of five . . . or a total of six, and five come from Elbow, one from the other area.

And then for grade 1, Loreburn village, one; Loreburn rural, two; Elbow village, one. So a total of four, there's one comes from Elbow and the other three from the

Loreburn-Strongfield area.

Then in grade 2: there's Loreburn village, two; Loreburn rural, zero; Elbow village, four; Elbow rural, two — another two — for a total of ten when six come from Elbow.

And then in grade 3, Madam Minister: there's Loreburn village, zero; Loreburn rural, three; Elbow village, six; Elbow rural, three; and other, one — total of 13, 10 come from Elbow, 3 from the other areas.

Then there's grade 4: a total of 10 from Loreburn-Elbow area; two come from Loreburn, two from Loreburn village, three from Elbow rural, and three more from Elbow village — 10 for a total; again 6 out of 10 come from Elbow.

Then in grade 5: there's Loreburn rural, zero; Loreburn village, zero; Elbow rural, two; Elbow village, five. In grade 5 that's a total of seven in that class. And seven out of seven come from Elbow.

And then in grade 6, there's a total of 13: Loreburn rural, four; Loreburn village, three; Elbow rural, one; Elbow village, four; and other, one — a total of 13, 6 come from Elbow.

Mr. Chairman, Madam Minister, I know this takes a little time, but if somebody goes to this much work, a school teacher in Elbow, I think it's only fair . . . and she asked for me to do this — and when this Mrs. Wilson done this, I think it's fair to her that I do this. So I apologize to the House, Mr. Chairman, if it's taking a little time. But it's quite important; it's important to these people, and I want to keep on.

In those classes that I gave you, Madam Minister, there was only the one class that had more at the north end than they did the south end. Elbow — the students mostly come from there.

The bus students, the total bus students is 19 come from Elbow out of the 34 that are bused in — 19 come from Elbow alone. Students from village of Elbow is 26, and special arranged bused, total students at 24 — total students is 58, which 43 out of . . . out of 58 students, Madam Minister, out of the 58 students bused in, 43 come from the Elbow area and the remainder 15 come from the North.

(2100)

Now this is just trying to impress upon you, Madam Minister, that the information you get from the area about all the students, and this being the proper thing to close the . . . you spent a lot of money on building up . . . more money on the Loreburn School and closing Strongfield School for the expense of the Elbow School, to me, is not correct when they have the population down at Elbow. They got the population of the students. Then they go through . . . and I won't read this into the record, Madam Minister, because the rest now is the proposed for '92-93. I'll just try to summarize here because it's not quite so important, but it is important. It's the future.

They got a total of eight for kindergarten and six come from Elbow. In grade 1 a total of seven, five come from the Elbow. For grade 2 a total of five and three come from Elbow. In grade 3, total of eight and seven come from Elbow. And in grade 4 a total of 13 and 10 come from Elbow. In grade 5 a total of 10 and 6 come from Elbow. In grade 6 a total of seven and seven come from Elbow.

And I think that's important to have that put into the record because it shows that most of the students do come from the Elbow area, and they talk about a decline. The division people from the Outlook division board have been notifying that there's been a drop in students at Elbow. They've been notifying the Saskatoon department, I believe a Mr. Glen Penner's been involved. And they've been saying, oh Elbow School is dropping. Well I'll tell you why it's dropping. It's the students from Loreburn that go to Elbow. They're the ones that drop. Elbow hasn't dropped. They're the only town in my whole riding, in fact in the whole school district, is Elbow and Hanley that has an increase in population. Every other town has dropped. Every other school has dropped.

So they're misrepresenting you, they're misrepresenting the department, and that's what's causing Elbow to be angry when they're saying, oh Elbow School is dropping down in students. It's not that way, Madam Minister. It's the Loreburn people that . . . And they can't help it, their town is smaller and nobody's talking about closing their school.

That's why I want it very clear that no one, including myself or anybody that's involved . . . Loreburn hasn't got a problem. They've got a K, 7 to 12, Elbow's got the K, 1 to 6. So if it was the other way around and Loreburn was losing a school, naturally I would be trying to maintain that school. But we're trying to spend a lot of money in the Loreburn School to . . . and it's going to be a lot of money if we go move Elbow up there because it won't be 438,000.

I'm understanding it's in a division, the Outlook division school board or unit board directive that's around a million, four or five thousand, a million four hundred thousand if they close the Elbow school and move them to Loreburn. So we're talking about an extra million dollars here. So we're talking about spending taxpayers' money of close to a million dollars more or less. That's been an architect that come in to Loreburn and made that estimate of spending approximately a million dollars at the expense of the Loreburn School. So I just want to suggest this, Madam Minister, that perhaps the people that are negotiating in your department and talking to the school boards and talking to the area, that maybe this could be a way of solving the problem.

I talked to some people in Loreburn the other night and when I mentioned this they said, you're right on, because we have to do something because the little town of Elbow or Loreburn, they're related to one another. They're friends with one another and we have to try to do our best to stop . . . if somebody's mad at me or mad at you when this is over, it doesn't matter. But we don't want little towns that are mad at one another.

So when I made this suggestion that you go ahead with

the money — the 438,000 or whatever — and move the Strongfield students there, if that's what Strongfield's not opposing that, and not take the K, 1 to 6 down to Elbow but just maintain the Elbow School for their 30 to 40 students that they would have left, that's what I think would . . . if we could just get those kind of negotiations going.

So I ask you, Madam Minister, if you could kind of talk along or maybe get some of your people to think along those lines and maybe we could negotiate between the local boards, the school division and maybe work out something that everybody goes away happy and nobody loses a school.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, this is exactly the process that we have advocated, that we have supported, and that we have been part of from the outset. And as I said earlier, this wasn't a letter, Mr. Chairman, in response to the member opposite, this was a briefing note dated June 16 that had actually been prepared in response to the questions raised on June 8 by the member from Arm River. And then at the time that estimates resumed — I think after some bell-ringing and other things that happened — the member from Arm River wasn't present when a question was raised by the member from Greystone with respect to the issue in the same area. So I tabled at that particular time and provided to her a copy of the briefing note dated June 16. But the member from Arm River wasn't present so he didn't have a copy.

But as I say, this is the briefing note of which is now nearly two months old, which provided some background of the situation. Consultations have been going on within the school division, with all the interested parties, as they should.

The original decision . . . the notice of decision that the school division made indicated action to be taken a year hence for the school term beginning September 1993. And the notice period is intended to . . . and as I understand is being used by all the people, parents, ratepayers, students who would be affected by the decision to try and search for viable alternatives. The department will be of support and assistance wherever they can, but will not interfere or try to influence in any way, as the ministry will not, the decision of the duly elected school division board.

So I can only say that we support that process of local autonomy. If there are different opinions being given there, questions being raised, meetings being held and people listening to each other with respect to this issue, that's exactly how the process is supposed to work as outlined in the Education Act. And we support that process and we have every confidence that the eventual outcome will be the right one, will be successful for all the people in the Outlook School Division.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Madam Minister. Yes I hope you're right, hope this can happen. But let's be very, very clear that no matter what they come up with out there for a solution, that if it means more money and more money from the department, the decision has to be made in here. So don't let us ever kid

ourselves, and you, Madam Minister, don't kid yourself, that local autonomy is going to be what's going to happen if it means more money and you have to, your department has to make the decision. I think you realize that.

That if they're going to be able to put the three schools . . . all amalgamate together in one school for \$438,000 which they have to have that — Loreburn must have that, that roof is in bad shape and it must go ahead. But if they go ahead with closing the Elbow school, can your department or can you, Madam Minister, give me a figure on how much more money it would cost to close the Elbow School and move it to Loreburn?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, the information that we have here, which is dated June 16, addresses a capital project for the Loreburn School to repair the roof and add relocateable classrooms which would accommodate the K to 6 students from Strongfield, Loreburn and Elbow, if indeed that was the decision of the school division, and the estimated cost of that, the roof and the relocateables was \$438,000.

Mr. Muirhead: — Then, Madam Minister, if this is the figure of \$400-and-some thousand . . . I understand that each relocateable is around \$200,000. So if it's 438 for two and a roof, how could one more, how could one more classroom take care of the Elbow School and still end up with the same amount of money?

I don't understand that. And I don't understand how come that the local school board has been given the figures . . . they were right there at the meeting, the Elbow school board was at the Outlook unit board meeting in Outlook. And an architect said it would cost about 1.4 to \$6 million to move Elbow to that school. Now that's what's wrong here. The wrong information's getting out. You can't have the taxpayers from the Outlook school district, some thinking that it's one and a half million and you, the minister, says about half a million. Now that's \$1 million out. But that's the way this whole government operates. The Minister of Finance is out millions every day. He just got an interim supply Bill here for half a billion dollars passed, and didn't even answer any questions on it.

So, Madam Minister, I want you to be able to tell me and so I can have it on the record for the Elbow people, which is right. Is it going to cost a half a million dollars, or roughly — whatever that figure was that you gave me — to move Elbow and have the Loreburn School be suitable for a K, 1 to 12 plus the kindergarten? What is it going to cost? Who is right, your figure or the Outlook School Division? Is it one and a half million or is it a half a million? Which is it?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, the estimate of the facilities branch was that for a capital project for the Loreburn School — I repeat — to repair the roof and provide relocateable classrooms which would accommodate the transfer of K to 6 students from Strongfield, Loreburn, and Elbow, if this was the wish of the school division, that that cost would be \$438,000. Whether someone else came and said that to build a whole new school, which didn't include relocateables or whatever the hypotheticals are, would cost more than that, I have no idea.

I think that it is the responsibility of the school division to make sure that the proper, adequate, and accurate information is placed before the ratepayers in support of their — the division board's — decision to take whatever action it is they deem is appropriate. And I think the hypotheticals of what would happen if — it is simply not in our purview. It is a decision that is the responsibility of the duly elected local board. We will try to provide resources for them in terms of estimates and making their decisions. When they have made their decision, we will support it, whatever it is, on the basis that they're duly elected to make those decisions.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Chairman, Madam Minister, if that figure turns out to be a million and a half, will you support that? Madam Minister, I went through a letter here tonight where they're going to close the Elbow School in June 30, 1993. And will you tell me that you will support no matter what they come up with, that if it happens to be a million dollars more than what the figure that you're giving me, that you'll support that. If it's a million dollars more or roughly will you support that, Madam Minister?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, where capital costs are concerned, as we've outlined in the House on previous occasions, the manner in which school capital is allocated is under review. Priority lists will be established. And any capital project will be evaluated on its merits and will receive funding as funds become available.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Chairman, Madam Minister, have you or have you not got a directive of some kind or a minute or whatever from the Outlook School Division talking in the figures of this Loreburn School being approximately a million and a half dollars? I don't want to be quoted to the exact dollar. Is there a directive in your department?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, we have an approval in principle for \$438,000 of what is called emergency funding for roof repairs and relocateables for the Loreburn school. This was at the request of the Outlook School Division with respect to the school, the configuration they want to have for their students.

We don't have, to my knowledge, an application for anything different than that or more than that. What we have is an indication that through requests to our facilities branch to reevaluate the situation, that the Outlook School Division is reconsidering that request.

We have nothing formal before us at the moment. All I can say is that the notice that the school division gave for actions that they might be considering a year from now in the fall of 1993 is under active reconsideration. I am confident that in the end the outcome will be the best one for the people of the area.

(2115)

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Chairman, Madam Minister, what we're talking about, a million dollars here difference. Because I was at a meeting in Elbow where the school . . . the chairman of the school unit and the director from

Outlook was at. And they said it's going to take the \$438,000, that we agree on, that that's what's been passed or whatever, or allocated to this school.

But they all agree, and the school division people said that will not handle the Elbow people. That's only to help to fix the school up for now, and the two relocateables to have for Strongfield. That is not including . . . you're getting wrong information. It is not including moving the Elbow students up there. The Elbow has to happen — whatever that cost is is an additional. And I think, Madam Minister, you're playing games with me by saying that's what's happened, this is what . . . whatever they . . . there'll be a new project to look at. We'll have all these new figures to look at. You're not being truthful with me, Madam Minister. Because I do believe that your department, some place, and your officials should be able to tell you, is there a directive sent from the Elbow School Division, talking about this new plan that we're talking about, and it's approximately a million and a half. Do you know anything about that figure at all, other than hearing it from me?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, as I've indicated, I am aware only that negotiations are going on. And the situation is in a state of flux. Different alternatives are being considered. We have nothing before us. I have nothing before me except the figures that I have given and tabled in this House.

I take exception to the member referring to untruths. I've been honest throughout. I've tabled the information I have. I've said with respect to this, the situation in the Outlook School Division, that it is under reconsideration by the people of the area. It is their responsibility as duly elected members of school boards. And I am sure that they are taking their responsibilities seriously, that they will consult with people, they will listen to people. I'm sure there'll be lots of possibilities, alternatives, and figures bandied around before a final decision is taken.

We will support them with resource people and information to whatever extent they request. Once their decision has been finalized, we will support it, because they're duly elected to make those decisions. In the mean time, I'm happy to share any information that I have. But I think that speculation, alternatives, discussions, consultations are not decisions, are not final, are not applications. And I think they should be treated as such.

Mr. Muirhead: — Well, Madam Minister, you can take exception to things I say. But I take exception to the information I'm getting tonight. Because I've asked you, have you ever . . . You could ask . . . You're not even asking your officials. Has the department . . . We'll be here all night if you can't answer me that question. Because I am sure that that motion, that that motion that that school board, school unit board, is in your department in Saskatoon. And therefore they must know about it here. Because everybody from Outlook to Elbow knows about the million and a half dollar figure.

And it's common sense that you don't close a town school with 400 people in it, and 64 students going to school there, and move 64 up there. And it's going to cost exactly the same amount of money if you don't move them.

Because the \$438,000, you told me yourself, was for the roof and two relocateable class-rooms. And so where is the extra . . . How are you going to move 60 more students in there — 64 more, from Elbow. That's what their total is there now. How are you going to move that into Loreburn school and then tell me you'll give me the right figures.

The department must know. How can you help them? How can you deal with the school unit? How can you deal with Elbow, Loreburn, and Strongfield in a right and proper manner, and deal with the boards and say you're . . . you sound so nice that you can do all the things. How can you do it if you're out a million dollars on your figures?

Because I know what's going to happen. Education estimates are going to pass and then out comes a budget next spring and Elbow could be forgotten, and it's too late for me to do anything about it. It has to be discussed here.

And all I'm asking . . . I'm not talking about what decisions they make out there because local autonomy I believe in; but not when it knows that the decision is made in your office, that's made in your department if they need a million dollars more money, or whatever they need. But you're not giving me those figures. And I'm sure the department must know, have some idea.

And you get up and answer every time . . . and you've got officials around you. Why don't you ask them? You just get up and give me a political rhetoric. Ask them the answers that I need and we'll get done.

That's why we've been in this House for 60 days — we don't get answers from you people. We don't get answers. We just get political rhetoric.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, the information that I tabled in the House, being a page of script, could hardly be described as political rhetoric. It was a page of facts.

I simply repeat again that whatever decisions are made with respect to the situation in the Outlook School Division and how they want to operate their schools will be made at the local level. It's the responsibility of the school board to make those decisions and we respect that responsibility and we respect the integrity of their decision making.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Chairman, Madam Minister, I'm going to get off this now because we're not getting any place. But I want to leave it this way: can I, Madam Minister, with your blessing, go and show this letter to the people from Strongfield, Loreburn, and Elbow and tell them what's in this letter is going to happen, and the Elbow school is going to be closed in June of 1993 — June 30, 1993 — and they're going to be going to the Loreburn school, and it's going to be for a cost of \$438,000? Can I go tell them that?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, I think that in order for people at the local level to make the correct decisions, they need current information. I have outlined to the member from Arm River that the note that he was given that was dated June 16 has now been superseded by

other events, other consultations that are taking place.

If he wants the people of the area to be aided by current, accurate information, then I suggest that he do, by all means, share it with them but make sure to point out the date on it and to make sure to outline that there are other meetings, other events, other happenings that have occurred since then and that it may not be current, and ask him, please, if he shares it with someone, to include the date and not to represent it as being current as of August 6 or later.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Chairman, Madam Minister, that's fair enough.

But I want to ask you this question now. You said prior tonight that \$438,000 would house the schools of Strongfield, Loreburn, and Elbow. You'll find that on *Hansard* tomorrow. Will \$438,000 handle the dollars and cents for the Loreburn school for those three towns? Now your officials should be able to tell you that.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, we can only repeat again as outlined on the top of the briefing note that we have tabled and shared with the member opposite, dated June 16, that the approval in principle was given for emergency repairs for the roof in Loreburn and relocatables, which would accommodate the additional enrolment from Elbow and Strongfield and Loreburn students, and that \$438,000 was the estimate for those repairs.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Chairman . . . Thank you, Madam Minister. We can close that down now because I can hold you to that. That if we see it . . . if we see the Loreburn school . . . Elbow School close and Loreburn school has additions built to it, with relocateable class-rooms, the roof repaired, and it's over \$438,000, will you be held responsible if it's more money than that?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, as the member opposite knows, that that . . . those figures are based upon real estimates and that that is the total cost, that that number — 438,000 — represents the total cost of the project. That's the amount that the department would be committed to pay.

Mr. Muirhead: — Madam Minister, I guarantee that you've been given the wrong information if you think you're going to have those three towns all under a school for \$438,000.

Can I have this commitment from you so we can get off this estimate tonight, or off my part of it? Can I have this commitment — that you will sit down with me and we can discuss this personally ourselves to get to the bottom of these figures? Can I have that commitment, Madam Minister?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, I have no problem whatsoever with making that commitment. I'd be happy to discuss this with the member from Arm River at our mutual convenience as soon as possible.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you very much.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairman. Madam Minister, in the few minutes that I was up between the member from Greystone and the member from Arm River, I asked you a question about all the boards and panels and commissions that are within your department and I haven't yet had an opportunity to look at that package of information that you supplied us. The clerks still have it and are photocopying. Will that information be included in that package?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, the personnel, the number of boards and commissions, agencies, advisory committees, their names, and the personnel on them were submitted in a previous package, I think at the last session of estimates. I'm not sure what date that would be now. It would be last week.

Then in the package tonight there was an undertaking on the covering letter that the expenses relating to those agencies, boards, commissions, committees are still being compiled and that we have the written undertaking to provide them as soon as that work is done. So I do believe that all information relating to boards, commissions, agencies, personnel, and costs have been covered.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Minister. I would just like, for the record: do you appoint all of the personnel to all those boards, panels, and commissions?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, there's a wide array of advisory committees to various parts of the department and it's impossible to make a blanket statement about how they are appointed or selected. Some of them, like the boards of governors of the universities and boards of regional colleges, SIAST, some of those institutes, it's provided in legislation that some or all of the membership is appointed by order in council and selected by the government, by the cabinet.

In other cases there are statutory requirements, for instance certain organizations are . . . people would be appointed to them by virtue of being nominees of a certain organization. So they're not all selected by the government or even by personnel in the department.

There might be a committee that's made up of by statute or constitutionally by a representative of the School Trustees Association, Teachers' Federation, LEADS (League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents), ASBOS (Association of School Business Officials of Saskatchewan) and so forth and then it would be, the committee would be composed of people that . . . of their nominees. It wouldn't be the subject of a selection process. So there's a whole range of ways of establishing the membership and who the individuals are.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Madam Minister, can you provide us with that information as to how each one of the personnel is appointed to those boards or panels and commissions?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Well, Mr. Chairman, we certainly can undertake to do that but it will take some time. In the undertakings that we made with the information that we

provided tonight, we certainly hope that the information will be very useful to the members opposite because we estimate that it will take us six to eight person weeks to develop that detailed information. This request that is before us right now will add to that time. So we'd certainly be glad to do it, but it does involve considerable staff time in compiling the information.

(2130)

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Minister. I appreciate your comments that you will indeed provide that and we appreciate the time that you have taken because it's important that everyone within the province become aware of where their money is being spent. And all these boards and appointments and commissions are part of where the taxpayers' money is going to.

All of these boards and commissions — particularly I'm thinking of like SIAST and the community colleges, etc. — who do they report to? Do they report to you, Madam, or to somebody else?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, again it's impossible to make a blanket statement. For instance, take the university board of governors, for example. Only half of the membership is appointed by the government or by order in council, if you like. There are other statutory positions there. For instance, the chancellor of the university, the president of the university, the representative of the faculty association, the representatives of the student unions, the nominees are elected people from the Senate, are members of those boards.

So in effect they are autonomous and they're not all appointed by the government; they don't report directly to the government. There are provincial . . . there's legislation passed by the province that regulates and defines their powers, but they don't all necessarily have the same reporting structure.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Madam Minister, that's for the universities but how about for SIAST? You, I believe, appoint the entire board. Do they report to you?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, in response to this, this is one of the areas that we asked the review committee for SIAST to make some recommendations on because the Act is fairly new, as the member opposite will know.

It was put in place by the previous administration in 1987 and it was The Institute Act and it prescribed how the board should be constituted, how many members there should be, some parameters for the operations of the institutes. But it says throughout the Act: the minister shall, the minister shall, and it does not mention the Department of Education or any role for the department or exactly how the board should relate to the minister.

At the time that we took office, I asked for some information from the Department of Education with respect to SIAST and I was told that the interpretation of the previous administration was that the Department of Education had no role with respect to SIAST, that it was

strictly between the minister and the chairman of the board.

And our interpretation is that it's not the minister and the board that, in fact, the minister should delegate that responsibility as outlined in the Act to a large degree, to a liaison function within the Department of Education in order that there can be some integration in the post-secondary system and that we don't have regional colleges, SIAST, the universities perhaps duplicating efforts and not having any monitoring function where anyone is even aware that that's happening.

So SIAST is a good example of where we saw a need to change the reporting structure and we intend to act on the recommendations of the review committee that the function within the Department of Education, that the people, person or people that will provide a liaison between the department and the institute should be strengthened. And we intend to act on that.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Madam Minister, if there is a liaison person put in place for, within the department for the SIAST to report to, who would that person in turn report to?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Well, Mr. Chairman, ultimately of course, and as it should be since such a large proportion of the funding for those institutes and for the educational system comes directly from the taxpayers of Saskatchewan as represented by the government and in the budget the Department of Education, the ministry and the government is ultimately responsible. But we have different ways of delegating that responsibility and making sure that there is a certain amount of autonomy in the system.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Madam Minister, we seem to have taken a long time to get around to the point that they actually do eventually report to you as the Minister for Education. Is that the same situation for the community colleges?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, I would have to ask the member to define the . . . there are not regional, there are not community colleges as such. The community college system disappeared, if you like, at the time of The Institute Act and The Regional Colleges Act.

The Chair: — Why is the member on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Chairman, with leave for the introduction of guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — I want to recognize the presence of a former member and former minister and presently employee of the Crop Protection Institute who is in the Mr. Speaker's Gallery, I believe with his family, Mr. Lorne Hepworth. Welcome to the Chamber.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — The Chair would join the minister in recognizing the presence of the former member.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Expenditure Education Vote 5

Item 1 (continued)

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairman. Madam Minister, I agree I used the wrong terminology in saying community colleges, but when I went to the schools, they were community colleges. The regional college system, do they report to you? Do you appoint the boards of directors for the community colleges, and do they report back to you?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, again we do by order in council appoint the members of the boards of directors of the regional colleges. Again we do expect to have and are putting together the elements of our review of the regional colleges. Again the Act is some five years old, and I think there are some contradictions, which is not unusual I guess, with new legislation and working your way through a new system about what the reporting system really is.

But I guess ultimately, of course, the province, through third-party funding, funds the system to a large extent. We do appoint the members of the boards. So one of the reasons for the review committee is that we want to refine what the reporting process is, but ultimately would be the government and the ministry.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Who outlines or defines the mandate for each of those boards and for the institution they represent?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, the mandate and the parameters under which these institutions would operate is fairly clearly spelled out in the respective Acts, The Regional Colleges Act 1987 and The Institute Act, which created SIAST, which was also passed in 1987.

Mr. D'Autremont: — And, Madam Minister, you're responsible for those Acts, are you not, for their administration?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Yes, under the current system, it would be the Minister of Education.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well thank you, Madam Minister. So we've established now that ultimately those institutions, SIAST and the regional colleges, report back to you that they're responsible for you. You set their direction; you interpret the Acts as to what is going to be established.

What I would like to ask you know concerns a number of employees that were with the regional college system. Mr. Terry York who was employed, I believe, in the Cumberland community college . . . he was terminated, is this not the case, by the board that you appointed?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, it's my understanding that there were some continuing problems within the Cumberland College. We did in fact appoint members to a board. I think it was in about March; it was fairly early in 1992. The board, to my knowledge, did part company with the principal that was there at the time. This was entirely their decision, was not influenced by anyone in the department or the ministry. Although the Act spells out a certain potential relationship, again as with the school divisions in the province, the department or the ministry does not interfere in the decisions made by the local board.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Madam Minister, if this ex-employee were to sue the Cumberland Regional College, who ultimately would pay if there were any damages awarded to him?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, all of the administrative matters, the costs of administration, including the cost of conducting any lawsuits or any liabilities, are entirely the responsibility of the respective regional college boards.

Mr. D'Autremont: — And, Madam Minister, where do they get their funds from?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, the income of the regional colleges comes from a variety of sources. The main source would be the core funding or the third-party grant that the Department of Education or the province provides.

There would also be tuition fees that they would receive. There would be contract arrangements that they might have to deliver courses to other colleges. There would be seats that they might be paid for to hold for manpower training. They have a fairly diverse source of revenue.

Any costs that they have . . . they are responsible for developing their own budget within those parameters. Approximately 20 per cent of their income comes from Saskatchewan Education. The balance is made up from the other sources that I mentioned.

So any costs that they have as a result of any actions that they may take, or contracts that they enter into, would have to be managed entirely within their own resources. The Department of Education would not be involved, would not be a party to contracts that they enter into, and certainly wouldn't be expected to absorb responsibility for any actions they might take over and above the normal funding.

Mr. D'Autremont: — If it should happen that Mr. York was to win a lawsuit against the Cumberland Regional College, are you indicating, Madam Minister, that the Department of Education would not provide any additional funding for that community college if the award was such as to put a burden on that institution?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, in the hypothetical situation that the member raises, the answer is no. The Saskatchewan Department of Education would pay, through its budget, through the third-party granting formula, exactly the same amount no matter what the

situation was. And there are no extraordinary allocations.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Madam Minister, I find it difficult to believe that, when you've appointed the board, the board reports to you, your department funds a portion, if not a good portion, of the institution; that the operations of the board is left, is without direction from the minister; that the terminations of employees at these boards is simply a matter of that board. There have been a number of times . . . the Cumberland board, the North West Regional College, have both let their principals — I believe is the term you used — go. All of a sudden these people are disappearing from the system, just since the new government has changed. Is this a pattern, Madam Minister, or is this just circumstances that occurred out of the blue?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, I think we have to really make sure that the information that we're using in this House is accurate. I am aware of a situation with the administration that did develop in the Cumberland College. But I'm certainly not aware of a situation with any other principal or any other administrative members in any of the colleges, including the North West College.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Madam Minister, I agree. I have to apologize in this case. It wasn't the principal. It was the board itself at the North West Community College.

Madam Minister, in questioning on June 8 you supplied us with a list of positions that had been deleted from the system. I believe you said there was 41 full time and six and a half part time positions that had been eliminated. Have there been any new positions eliminated since that time? And is this list the complete list, including all the secondments?

(2145)

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, to my knowledge, the list that we provided in early June was complete at that time. And there haven't been any other changes since then.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Does the list that we were provided include all the secondments also?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, I believe there were two separate lists. One was the positions that were eliminated, or the vacant positions that were not intended to be again filled. And then there was a separate report, I believe, on the number of secondments, where we said that they had reduced . . . I recall the figures, that last year there were 71 secondments and they reduced this year to 57. And I'm quite sure if the member will look at the material he will find that there is an outline of what positions those were.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Madam Minister, they're not on the list that I have. And they may be in the package that you supplied us this evening. I'm not sure, in that you say the list was provided. Did it include all of the names of the people that were the secondments, the 71, the 57 that are currently still in position, and what their positions were, and what programs they were involved in?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, to my recollection I think that we used numbers only and not a list of names because, by the nature of the secondment, it should be temporary. The people are, if you like, borrowed from the field or from various parts of the education system to lend a certain amount of expertise to a project, and then when the project is finished, they go back to their permanent employer. So there certainly is, or should be, a rapid turnover of secondments. So I believe we didn't supply names, just numbers, and the areas of activity, parts of the department that they were engaged by.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Madam Minister, could you supply me with a list, please, of the projects those secondments were working on, the name of the person who was in that project, and whether that project is now completed, or whether it's still ongoing? And whether or not any of those projects that are still ongoing have had any secondments terminated or however you deal with secondments to remove them from the program and allow them to go back to where they came from?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, we certainly have no hesitation in undertaking to provide that information, but I would just like to . . . with the caution that it will take us a bit of time, more than just a day or two. I must point out that we did reduce the size of the administration and the administration budget for the department by 12 per cent this year. So we certainly have people that are fully engaged at all times and will have to make time to compile this information.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Minister. I would appreciate it if, at some point in time, you could supply us with that information. Because, Madam Minister, there were a number of secondments that were allowed to be terminated within the department and have gone back to their respective positions wherever that was.

But my concern is, is whether or not those secondments that were allowed to lapse, whether those projects were completed, whether or not those positions were refilled again afterwards. Has there been any circumstances where that has happened, where a secondment has been removed from the program and a new one put in, or whether the program is continuing on.

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, it's difficult to answer that because, for instance in the curriculum area there are a number of different streams of activity going on at the same time and different kinds of expertise is required. So it's conceivable that a secondment from the curriculum area might have gone back out to the field and another person might have come in, but it might be working on a different project and with a different area of expertise.

So, you know, if the member opposite has any specific cases that he'd like to ask about, I'd be glad to answer. But it's difficult to answer that question in a global way.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Minister. I will indeed take a specific case, one Joan Berntson. What was the project that she was involved in? Has that project been terminated? And if not, why was she let go?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, Mrs. Berntson was engaged on a temporary project, the PALS (Principles of the Alphabet Literacy System), the literacy project in Saskatoon. It was slated to terminate . . . that portion of the pilot was slated to terminate in June.

It's a requirement for people, for the temporary employer — in this case the department — of people who are seconded, to notify the school division from which the employee comes, who is the permanent employer, by January of the contract year, that the person who is seconded will not be re-engaged.

So that was done. That notice was given by the department in January, to the . . . I believe it was the Regina School Division that Mrs. Berntson was permanently employed by and had tenure with. There was certainly no attempt to single out any person. It was understood from the beginning of the secondment that the secondment was for the purposes of that temporary project. The project was complete; the proper six months notice was given that the secondment would be ended; and those are the facts of that case.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Were there any other secondments involved in that program?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, no. There were a number of field projects — I think four in the province — but there were no secondments to my knowledge, other than that one, in the area.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Minister. How about Elizabeth Azzopardi? What was the project she was involved with, and was it terminated?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, I . . . Just a clarification. I think that the member opposite means Isabel Azzopardi. Ms. Azzopardi was in the curriculum area. The project that she was engaged in had reached the end of a phase. A number of people from the curriculum area who were seconded . . . I'm not sure exactly of the numbers — but that was the area where most of the secondments were and it was the area where the largest number of secondments were ended. And one of the positions has recently been advertised and I do believe that some of the people, some of the secondments that were terminated, the people who had those secondments, have applied for that position.

Now whether it's been filled or not, I'm not sure that a decision has been made. I think it's at the stage of sort of a short-list being established. But that is the situation there.

Certainly there was no targeting of any individuals in either of the cases you cite.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Madam Minister, within that project that Mrs. Azzopardi was on, were all of the secondments terminated?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, there were a number of secondments in that area. I guess a problem with that particular position was — and some others in the curriculum department — as I said in an earlier

session, that secondments are meant to be temporary, and what we did discover is that there were a large number of secondments that had been renewed and renewed and renewed over a long period of time, in which case the position should really be a permanent one. So after ending a number of the secondments, the situation was reviewed and it was determined that one or some of those positions should be permanent. And they were thus posted in an open competition. And to my knowledge some of the people who were seconded and the terms were ended, did apply for those positions. But it's still in a selection process and a final determination hasn't been yet made.

The Assembly adjourned at 10 p.m.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Madam Minister, you say that a number of these secondments were there for an extended period of time. But of all those people seconded, were they providing valuable service and were they doing a good job on the programs that they were involved in?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, the issue wasn't whether the incumbent secondments were doing a good job or not, but whether indeed those positions should be seconded positions or whether they should be permanent positions. Because we're in a process of internal reorganization in the department, one of the things that we wanted to make sure of, in reporting the establishment and the person years in the blue book, to make sure that it was an accurate reflection of the manpower requirements in a department and that there wasn't — as there was some in the previous administration, in some departments, particularly — sort of a fudging of what the real numbers were by having a lot of temporary appointments, secondments, order in council appointments. If there's permanent work to be done, then it should be represented as part of the permanent establishment and it should be budgeted for; it should be shown in the blue book.

And that was our reason for reviewing the whole number of secondments there were, bringing it out into the open, deciding whether it was a permanent position that was permanently needed or whether it was indeed temporary.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Minister. I can't disagree with you on that, because I believe that if a person is involved in a job in a project for an extended period of time, that it indeed should be a permanent position. Does that mean that a number of these secondment positions will indeed be turned into permanent positions?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Chairman, this will be reviewed in the context of the review of the internal organization of the department.

Certainly as I've said before, secondments — lending temporary expertise in a project area — is a very valid use of talent and very cost effective. But, you know, we have to make sure that if it is temporary and it's a secondment, that the person goes back to their former employer and that secondments are not abused to increase the establishment in a way to sort of obscure what the real situation is in terms in manpower.

The committee reported progress.