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| Manitoba | 29e | 2e | Remarques préliminaires à l’étude des crédits du Ministère de l’Éducation | 15 avril 1970 | Saul Miller | Minister of Education | NPD |

Thank you. Mr. Chairman, by my calculations we have about 54 hours left and I wouldn't be surprised if this ended the estimates for this year. All on education. Mr. Chairman, before I go into my opening remarks I want to acknowledge a real debt of gratitude that I feel to my Deputy Minister, the Assistant Deputy Ministers of the Department, the various branch heads, as a matter of fact all members of my staff, who without their support I could never have achieved in the few months that we’ve been in office anything like the knowledge that I've tried to achieve. It is a large department and certainly without their backup

I would simply have been drowned and swallowed up by the sheer volume of the work that this department undertakes. Mr. Chairman, as the honourable members are aware, the department is much too large really to discuss in terms of making many really meaningful generalizations. One can point here and there to pertinent factors which have made change necessary in one or two areas, but by and large one must deal with the particular areas themselves in some depth in order to acquire a proper understanding of why changes have become necessary; for example, how the dynamics of social change sometimes affect programs.

The major portion of the over $11 million increase in the department's estimates are a reflection of the increasing educational needs of an increasingly complex industrial age. On the other hand there is another kind of change involved, and that is the qualitative, qualitative in nature, since it involves not simply an extension of old programs and attempting to cope with new circumstances, but rather the adoption of new priorities in certain previously undeveloped areas of departmental policy, and it is in this realm of qualitative change that our innovations occur.

It is also within this framework of change that certain generalities may be permitted since it is here that the effects of a different kind of outlook might be best observed. In a department as large as mine it would be nonsense to say that a new government and a new Minister can effect the department's doings on a wholesale basis within a few months; nor would that be necessarily a desirable goal. I am by nature a cautious individual and I don't rush in and change things around till I am satisfied that a change is desirable and it will achieve something. In any case, the greater portion of our expenditures must be geared towards the maintenance of programs which affect the lives of so many Manitobans on a day to day basis.

We can emphasize certain aspects of those programs and we can de-emphasize others; we can tinker with some of them mechanically so as to provide more efficient programmatic processes; but our basic responsibility in this regard is to administer existing programs as they effect and in turn are affected by the requirements of a growing1developing Manitoba. That the Universities Grants Commission will have an increased allocation of $6 million is an example of our response both to the demands of more Manitobans in seeking the best education possible and to the requirements incumbent upon us to facilitate those provincial institutions whose growth may be seen to parallel in so many ways the development of our province.

We can make no bones about accepting the necessity for such an increase in those expenditures, recognizing that they are all investment that will yield multiple benefits to the province.

At the same time, we also recognize and accept the necessity to provide the opportunity to take proper advantage of the availability of educational services. For this reason members will note an increase of over a million dollars to student aid. The determination of this government to do everything within its power to make it possible for more students to have access to whatever level of education is suitable to their abilities and to their interests was demonstrated last fall when immediate steps were taken to meet a need arising from inadequate funds by including at that time $75,000 for student aid purposes in our supplementary estimates.

A few figures might help to illustrate the way this year's increased funds have been tentatively allocated for certain of our major support areas. Our secondary bursaries have been increased by $20,000, or by 10.3 percent over last year; $620,000 has been added to our University Undergraduate Bursaries Fund, or an increase of 79.7 percent over last year; our Post Graduate Bursaries Fund has been increased by $15,000, that is by 50 percent; our Technical Technology Bursaries have been boosted by $166,000 or by 123.4 percent.

I should like also to draw to the attention of the honourable members to certain other changes which I am sure will be of interest and will meet with their approval. Within the Student Aid Program for this year provision has been made specifically for adults, or what is known as mature students. Formerly, students at our Winnipeg Health Education Centre were assisted from the general monies allocated to secondary school bursaries. This year a specific allocation has been made for this purpose. More significant, however, is the provision of some $145, 000 in the estimates for mature students. These monies are intended to provide a measure of assistance for adults who are registered as mature students at one of our universities and are attempting to establish the necessary credits to be accepted as full time students. Previously, no bursary support was available for these students until they had been accepted for· full time study.

Also under student aid, Mr. Chairman, there are allocations of $100,000- $75,000 to a student summer employment program and $25, 000 to a summer enrichment program, both of which are closely related by design. All members here are aware of the growing problem of student summer employment. Our labour market is not geared to accept the vast numbers of employables for such short periods of time. At the same time, it is our belief that the creation of jobs with public funds just for the sake of making work is not necessarily the best solution to the problem. We have therefore attempted to set up an employment program which will be most beneficial to both students in terms of the degree of their financial needs, their qualifications and their interest, and of course the public with whose funds they are being employed.

On the other hand, there's also been set up a student placement office for referral to summer positions available in mainline departments and Crown corporations, as well as operating as a communications clearing house for the assembling of relevant data regarding past and present government summer employment practices. Hopefully, we will thereby be able to assure in future an equitable distribution of government jobs based on a uniform criteria of utility, because in the past it seems such jobs were given out on a somewhat catch-as-catch-can basis. We are adhering to the notion of public responsibility by seeing the jobs will be provided to the greatest extent possible on a confirmed need qualification basis. The public dollar will thus go furthest in terms of aiding those who most require financial support to continue their education.

For this year the placement office will act more as a communications clearing house than a job referral agency. For one thing, there are numbers of students counting on jobs they held last summer who have budgeted for their next years of studies according to their reasonable expectations of being able to come back to their jobs. At the same time it should be pointed out that there are jobs in certain parts of Manitoba for which it would not be feasible to force applicants to go through some agency in Winnipeg or other major centre. All such positions will be handled as before, using whatever means for hiring in those locations which are feasible for the various line departments concerned. In any case, the placement office will be going into full operation on April 15th, and that is today I believe.

There are two types of jobs involved in the program we envisage; that is jobs through the mainline departments which are not budgeted for lack of funds in the preliminary estimates but which are still judged to be needed and of value for the departments to have done for them, and jobs through our summer enrichment program. The latter job creations, we feel, may be measured in terms of direct social value. Indeed, the members I hope will be interested to know that the program was originally conceived in terms of the recognized need for summer employment, but the emphasis has fallen now upon the social service aspect of the program.

The government recognizes that the barriers preventing the individual fulfillment in our education system are more than merely financial. And this applies to all levels of education.

Despite a free primary and secondary educational system, not all social classes of our young people profit co-equally, and ultimately they do not have real equality of opportunity either towards future educational endeavours or in terms of employment prospects. Research has shown that the problem begins at the intermediate level with students who do not have the benefit of meaningful extra-curricular activities related to their in-school educational experiences.

The children suffering most from these imperfections are those from homes with a low income where there is too often a lack of interest, or motivation sometimes, towards the supplementing of public school education. This deprivation of an important aspect of education relegates many of our young to positions outside the mainstream of our society at a very early age.

So the allocation for the programs, which is the $25,000 I referred to previously, is a program which will be under the directorship of Mr. Victor Pruden. It will be run at Frontier Collegiate at Cranberry Portage over a period extending from the beginning of July to the middle of August. There are to be two sessions each. Now this may change somewhat but as of today this is what it looks like, two sessions each, accommodating about 150 children in the 10 to 12 year age bracket. Initially, the program is being run on an experimental basis and children from certain designated areas which are now serviced by Winnipeg and Frontier School Divisions will be taken on. we hope to be able to extend the program and enlarge its scope over future summers. For the present, its utility may be measured in terms of a fuller utilization of existing educational facilities and the provision of approximately 25 meaningful summer jobs providing not only income for university students but a vital learning experience to students employed in the program, as well of course as the redeeming value, social value of such a program. All told then, Mr. Chairman, our student placement program should be able to provide a minimum of between 75 to 100 jobs which will have been provided out of the direct budget allotment.

Members have already heard of the $1.2 million further available for student aid purposes administered through the Canada Assistance Act by my colleague the Minister of Health and Social Development. Members should further .note this is an indication of this government's attitude towards the question of educational support, and that in fact education is a very closely tied-in aspect of social development and support of students should be fostered on the same basis as other aspects of social development, that is to be geared towards aiding the fulfillment of the individuals in our society. Support to the individual in need who possesses the capacity and the desire to better himself through education should not be viewed as attaching a stigma to that individual, but rather as a duty upon government and the public in aiding the process of fulfillment and hence the well-being of the individual.

In this regard as well, the inclusion of the summer enrichment program I referred to under student aid should in no way be viewed as accidental or irregular. Rather, it is indicative of the recognition on our part that the conception of the purpose of student aid must be widened to include the consideration of factors other than the purely financial which affect the educational progress of our citizens. There are many young members of our society who are handicapped because of barriers relating to cultural motivational factors. Although equality of opportunity has been defined in terms of similarity of treatment as exemplified in our elementary and secondary schools, that is the education by the provision of free texts and the absence of fees, the insufficiency of this definition may be seen as reflected in the dramatic dropout rate of native pupils for example at the secondary level. To attempt to deal with such problems, an allocation of $250,000 has been made in our student aid program for special pilot projects designed to encourage at first a small, but hopefully a potentially large number of the disadvantaged, to compete satisfactorily within our educational system.

By way of example of one such special project, it will be designed to encourage northern native people who wish to live in and serve their community to enter teacher training programs at our universities. The rationale in part of course is to provide more native teachers for predominantly native communities. Such teachers versed in their own native tongue, conversant with native culture and the local living conditions, would obviously be best suited to motivate the students in those areas. The obvious and well-intentioned answer to this problem might be, let's provide more bursaries to encourage native people's entrance into the teaching programs and just leave it at that. But no matter how well-intentioned that response it is insufficient, and experience has shown that in providing solutions to certain fundamental problems more must be done.

Again I must repeat the problem is more than simply financial. It rarely occurs to us to follow up the argument with an analysis of what in fact happens to many northern native people when they go to our post secondary institutions. Research as shown that they drop out despite all the financial support possible in totally disproportionate numbers to their school fellows.

Now why is this? I put these questions, which in themselves I think should provide the answer to the members. How would you or I react to be placed in a new locale in an environment with such mechanical paraphernalia as traffic lights, electric stoves, things which are completely foreign and strange to us, all of which we've never perhaps seen in our lives. How would we react if we were lodged in a dwelling. house with almost nothing in common with our fellow boarders and asked to fend for ourselves. Therefore, one of the projects will be geared to dealing with this particular problem. Proper environmental aid will be provided to attempt to assure as smooth a transition as possible for teaching students coming from our northern points. Now such are the many aspects of a general student aid program as defined in this government's terms, Mr. Chairman.

I would like now to turn to the important area of curriculum development which, as the honourable members are aware, are the focus of considerable attention by educators everywhere. A number of areas are undergoing further revision as part of the constant updating process, and this is one of the factors that we have to - recognize, that education never stays or stands still, there is the constant change and the constant change is essential. So that we have witnessed the greater involvement of an increasing number of teaching personnel and programs and the evaluation of programs. We move away from prescriptively-styled curriculum publications to those characterized by greater breadth and flexibility, the authorization of a wider range of textual materials and the encouragement of experimentation in new approaches and in new methods. Mr. Chairman, as the decade of the '60's was important for curriculum growth, that of the '70's will have even greater significance. The pace of educational change is so swift that it is impossible to identify all those elements that will during the course of the next ten years impinge upon the educational system in Manitoba. At the same time there are certain directions that are evident and these I would like to discuss briefly.

Initially, I wish to draw to the attention of the honourable members certain basic principles relative to curriculum responsibility that will be developed and that will represent a new departure. Specifically, it is intended to recognize the complexity of the educational system through the allocation of clear and precise responsibility in the area of curriculum decision-making, so that there is a clear understanding of the respective roles of the province, school system and the teachers, so as to form an effective three-way partnership in the overall curriculum design. The essential purpose underlying the decision-making rationale that is being conceived is the development of a framework that will permit and encourage sound and realistic detailed planning of curriculum and instruction at the local level without sacrificing those elements of provincial coordination and service that have supplied the foundation of our educational system. And it will be equally necessary in the future, as it has been in the past, to provide the necessary articulation within the system.

The development of such a partnership, Mr. Chairman, in a more practical and realistic way than has hitherto been possible is a logical outgrowth of the recognition of the fact that curriculum may no longer be regarded as a fixed body of content presented according to some predetermined pattern, but rather as a variety of experiences geared more specifically to individual student interests. Thus the emphasis on learning resources and the evident needs of individual students are combining with a de-emphasis of rigid grade standards to bring forward a new look at the learning process and the means to realize an appropriate pattern of education for students who will live out much of their lives in the 21st century.

In developments already under way, and others that may be anticipated in the near future; there is already considerable evidence of the trend to which I have alluded. In its preliminary statement a few weeks ago for example, CORE, which is the Committee on the Reorganization of Secondary Schools, emphasized the fact that the educational system must be ongoing, flexible and centred on the human needs of the students that it is designed to serve. The Interim Report of this Committee is expected in the fall and I anticipate that it will provide important guidelines for the future of our secondary schools. And I would like to point out that on this committee the students take an active part as well .so that we are getting the input from the clients who receive the service from the educational system.

Again, a memorandum that was distributed in February emphasized the fact that course names, that is course designations such as university entrance, general and combined, will no longer be used in our high schools but rather from the total range of courses available in these formerly separate patterns, schools will be encouraged to provide programs more specifically suited to individual student needs. A number of the curriculum councils - these are the bodies that are presently studying future developments in individual subject areas - will be reporting this year and it is anticipated that their recommendations will further serve to endorse a more flexible curriculum design geared to individual interests.

We are beginning the task of identifying such further steps as may be necessary. In this regard the area of language teaching and programs for children of Indian-Metis ancestry at both the elementary and secondary levels are high on our list of priorities. Further in keeping with this government's avowed belief in the necessity to strengthen the province's cultural mosaic, my department has under active study the question of the lowering of the grades in which language instruction may be introduced. It is proposed that children starting even at the kindergarten level might be able to take such subjects as Cree or Saulteaux, Ukrainian, German and perhaps others, anywhere where the ethnic enrolment and the corresponding interest could warrant such innovation. A bill dealing with French as a second language, in keeping with the Parliament of Canada's declaration in this regard, will be introduced later .during this session and I'm sure will be of interest to the House when it is introduced.

Since the kind of changes to which I have alluded will necessitate a considerable change in the attitude and behaviour of students, teachers and administrators alike, it is recognized that they will not be accomplished overnight and that they will likely go ahead on a broken front as schools and school systems and people show themselves ready to assume new responsibilities.

In all of these developments the department and the Curriculum Branch, specifically the branch itself, must play an important role, not only because certain fundamental patterns within the educational system are defined most efficiently though perhaps not exclusively at the provincial level, but also because of the necessity to provide for the functional development of services to establish and to maintain liaison between the varying levels of decision-making and of adequate evaluatory procedures in regard to a total provincial instructional design.

The provincial curriculum is perceived specifically as centering on three primary functions:

(1) The development of provincial programs that seek to maintain continuity and cohesion through the provision of a broad frame of reference rather than through a narrow prescription;

(2) the act of involvement and the necessary professional development of the administrators and teachers;

( 3) the stimulation, encouragement and support of planned, innovative practices at provincial and at local levels; and

(4) to work with local schools and school systems in the adaptation of provincial programs and in the construction of special programs to meet local needs.

Members are already aware that over the past few years both the department and the High School Examination Board have progressively reduced their involvement in central external examinations. Increasingly the task of measurement and evaluation has been transferred to the schools to parallel their increasing involvement in curriculum development and the greater flexibility of course and subject treatment. Amongst other amendments to the education department act, which will be presented very shortly for your consideration will be one abolishing the High School Examination Board. This change has been discussed with and agreed to by all those bodies represented on the High School Examination Board, including the universities. The monies formerly diverted to the functions of the High School Examination Board will now be applied to providing a central testing service which will develop diagnostic and achievement tests on a province-wide basis to include a scoring and evaluation service. These tests will be used to assist pupils, teachers and parents in educational progress and standards for diagnostic, remedial and educational guidance programs and purposes.

As part of this testing service, it is proposed that the department will assume the cost of the SACU tests for all those Grade 12 students planning to go on to post secondary education either in Manitoba or elsewhere. For the benefit of some members, who I am sure as I throw out abbreviations they will feel as I did when I had these abbreviations thrown at me, I didn't know what they meant, SACU stands for Service for Admission to University and Colleges. Now since these tests will be free to Manitoba residents. it is assumed that they will become part of the admission documents required by our three provincial universities and by our community colleges, to be used in conjunction with school based academic achievements in the admission procedures of these universities. The groundwork for these changes was laid by the research directors of our department and I would now like to touch upon some of their functions.

One new function is the co-ordination and development both within the department and outside of the growing use of electronic methods of data gathering and retrieval. Work is already under way within the department in converting teacher records to punch card and tape form, and in fact we have already been able to make use of the existing data in several small research projects done internally. In addition, the directorate is working nationally with the Dominion Bureau of statistics and with other provinces to produce standardized forms and procedures for data gathering and retrieval in a number of areas which lend themselves most conveniently and effectively to these problems. Locally, a Manitoba education information and access system has been set up jointly with a number of school divisions which are venturing into electronic data· processing to ensure that our growing involvement. in this medium proceeds on a cooperative basis. One example of this cooperation was a recent grant to the Winnipeg School Division for research and development in electronic data processing.

The research and planning involvement of the department have been growing. Steadily through the research directorate. Internally, the director and his assistants are members of the basic planning team for the government's newly developed PPBP which is the Planning and Programming Budgeting Process. In addition they provide advice, consultation and professional services for a number of research projects that are now being carried out by other directorates. The directorate is also responsible for the distribution. of funds to support research projects within the province. An example of the type of projects supported were given in the recently tabled annual report of the department which all members have received.

I would like now to make mention of a number of changes we have made in the interests of efficiency - and economy I hope. We have decided to end the operations of our Attendance Branch. As far as could be determined, the branch was simply duplicating work already done in the schools in compiling attendance records and the original rationale for the branch's existence no longer applies. The branch will formally cease operations in September and its

termination should represent a saving of about $30,000 a year. Also, we are establishing a central bulk purchasing system. The purpose of this will be, we hope, to lower the cost of purchasing equipment for the schools. The best example I can think of "Offhand is the purchase of school buses which we hope will be done on a central bulk purchasing basis and I think that some savings can be realized. At the same time we are taking a very close look at our present policy regarding the supplying of texts, that is textbooks, and I anticipate being able to effect further economies in that area. We couldn't move in this area this year, but hopefully for next year we will come up with some new ideas.

I should now like to touch, Mr. Chairman, on developments in the area of vocational high schools. Now as members are aware, the Federal Government has approved so far five regional comprehensive vocational schools. They are located in Selkirk, Dauphin, Metro East, Metro West and Swan Valley. Tenders have been received and construction contracts have been awarded for the schools at Dauphin and Selkirk. We hope that the projects in the other three areas mentioned will also be moving forward very soon.

Consideration is also being given to submissions which have been received from other areas in the province, and occupational interest inventories and surveys are being conducted by our vocational high school directorate in cooperation with local authorities in a number of these areas. During the coming year we hope to establish future priorities in terms of established needs for accommodation and broader training in other areas of Manitoba.

I would like to say at this point a word, Mr. Chairman, about vocational high school grants which are included in the estimates under Financial Support Services. Now these funds provide for adult evening schools. They include the citizenship classes offered by the school divisions and for the establishment and operating grants or 50 percent courses in business education, vocational and industrial courses, and grants for practical art subjects like industrial art shops and home economics. The steady growth of these various classes in our schools is a matter of great satisfaction to the government, not only in adult education but in vocational subjects and home economics. The increasing provision for adult evening classes of all kinds reflect the growing interest in education as a continuing process in the lives of our citizens as well as a community interest in making wider use of our school facilities. At the same time, increasing provision of business education and vocational industrial courses and practical arts and home economics classes assures that a wider range of educational opportunities and choice of. subjects is being made available to more of our Manitoba students who have been restricted for so long to a limited academically-oriented program. These latter courses will also serve as excellent preparation for admission to our community colleges.

We have one major alteration in the vocational high school grant system, or grant structure. Effective September 1 an additional per capita grant will be available to unitary school divisions which operate recognized business education and/or industrial vocational courses. In addition to the regular grants earned under the present foundation program, a per capita grant of $325 per pupil per annum will be payable on behalf of industrial vocational students and $125 per pupil per annum for business education students. In this way we hope to make possible the attendance of more pupils at high schools offering such programs who are from other divisions and to recognize the higher costs of these programs.

Members will be further interested to hear that we have revised our grant system in the area of special education. The present grant structure for special education provides monies to school divisions on the basis of handicapped children being enrolled in special categories and special classes. There has to be a minimum of eight - children with the same handicap enrolled in a class, which is certified by the health authorities as belonging to that particular category in order for special educational grants to be paid.

There are five accepted categories - mentally retarded, physically handicapped, mentally disabled, the hard of hearing and the visually impaired. But they were not in themselves indicative of the need to support financially special services, and other types of educationally handicapped children. and particularly children with perceptual handicaps, those who are culturally different, and the environmentally deprived, and in the past some of these children have been labelled mentally retarded and placed in appropriate classes, sometimes, perhaps deliberately, in order to obtain for them more individualized approach than could be offered in the regular stream, and in all too many cases for the sake of administrative convenience. Mr. Chairman, research and experience in numerous pilot projects in many other jurisdictions has clearly indicated that this approach was totally improper for the latter named categories, and in fact it did them more harm than good. As long as financial support for special services was tied to the special class concept, to the categorization, there would be a tendency to extend, mostly for administrative purposes, special class establishments and to continue thereby to misplace into the special class children who are educationally handicapped rather than mentally retarded.

Thus effective September 1, 1970, we will discontinue the enrolment formula for teachers of special education classes and will substitute a formula which will allow a more flexible handling of instruction, allowing school boards to determine whether they will discontinue some of the special classes and place special class teachers in regular classes for at least part of their time. The new formula is one authorized teacher for each 500 pupils in a division. In addition, there will be an authorized teacher grant calculated on the basis of one teacher for each 2, 500 pupils in unitary school divisions for specialist purposes.

Mr. Chairman, at this point I would like to make a few comments about our Youth and Manpower Branch, and as well, I would like to remark on the concept of the community college in itself. The purpose of the community college is to meet specific educational needs of a large segment of the community - high school graduates, young people, even though they may not be high school graduates, also mothers and fathers, mature workers and pre apprentice trainees. It should provide courses, many non-degree courses in arts and sciences, trades and technologies, business procedure, commercial practices, public services, and in the broad field of adult education, all within one building or integrated complex, and Manitoba's three community colleges will continue to produce skilled artisans in many different trades and technologies, to develop supervisory and management personnel in various fields of supply and service. They will also provide training for adult workers who want to become qualified in some new trade or who want to become better qualified in the field of work in which they already earn their living. We have introduced new opportunities for course study. Young people and adults will be able to enroll in one or more selected segments of the complete course. For example, a young man wanting to take training in front-end alignment will be able to do so in the future without having to enroll in the complete automotive mechanics course. Similarly, a young woman wishing to study personnel relations as a segment of the hotel and restaurant management course, will be able to do just that without having to enroll in the whole course as heretofore.

The community colleges will provide basic opportunities for enrolment in many personal improvement subjects such as public affairs, philosophy, recreation and crafts, which will help mature people to understand themselves and others better, and through which they may be helped to live fuller lives in various forms of self-expression.

Graduates who obtain diplomas or certificates from any one of Manitoba's three community colleges may be assured that these symbols of competence will be readily recognized and accepted by prospective employers in all parts of Canada. The contents of the courses have been carefully developed and assessed by advisory boards and committees on which local leaders in business, industry, labour and education serve with distinction. Courses are topical to begin with and their content is kept in line with changes that take place in methods and techniques in business, industry and public service institutions.

The community college courses themselves are highly regarded by the business and industrial world and the graduates find ready acceptance as new employees in many different sectors of the economy. Although it does not directly prepare students for higher education, some will go on to take university work; The community college stands on its own. It develops and operates its own courses; it confers its own diplomas and certificates; its business is to produce well-trained, competent graduates who because of their skills and their knowledge will find immediate employment upon graduation. Furthermore, and perhaps most important, the community college is closely identified with the entire community of young people and adults. Through many different kinds of courses, short term and long term, for pre-employment as well as self-improvement, courses offered day or night six days a week all the year round, the community college will serve a large section of the entire community.

Members will be interested to know that we have created a Community Colleges Council to replace the old provincial technical and advisory board in the role of advising the department regarding future development of the college. It is composed of 20 members, including four faculty members from the colleges, four students, seven lay members, the two chairmen of the advisory boards from the Assiniboia College and Keewatin College, and three members from government departments. In this task they will be aided by the Review and Development Branch of our department, a small recently developed staff unit whose primary assignments include the assessment and analysis of on-going programs and projection of needs as they may be seen and dealt with for the future.

The other division of the Youth and Manpower branch concerned with the operations of the many programs offered through the community colleges and through extension agencies across the province has been reorganized on the basis of two fundamental factors. (1) It provides a much greater degree of decentralization than heretofore; (2) it provides for participative management which means that greater numbers of students, staff and administrators and members of the community at large will be involved in the operations of the community colleges.

As a result of this we are already working towards less arbitrary and more realistic prerequisites for course entry, for more and more open-ended curricula to allow for greater degree of individual progress, particularly respecting the background experience that an adult may have had before coming back for further education, and for many more part-time student possibilities than have existed in the past. Our general reorientation is towards a greater encouragement for people who may feel that they are under-employed or simply under-involved citizens to do something about it by increasing their potential through part-time or full time study. At the same time greater attempts are being made to program effectively both for socio-economic community needs and from an individual point of view in terms of providing opportunities for people who are looking for newer avenues of self-fulfillment.

Some statistics regarding enrolment at our community colleges may be of interest. Red River Community College over the past calendar year has had 13,780 students; including over 6,000 in evening and part-time study; Assiniboia Community College in Brandon, 2,754; Keewatin Community College at The Pas, 1,263; a special course taken in most cases to remote parts of the province to meet special needs arising from technological changes or through shifts or occupational direction, 952 students; in management development and training in industry courses offered across a spectrum of business and industry, over 4, 000; in adult academic upgrading courses offered in 35 Manitoba communities as well as in the community colleges themselves, over 3,000. Thus there are well over 27,000 Manitoba students who have been involved in our community colleges in the past year and I feel that we may look forward to the future development with both interest and justifiably high expectations.

One of the areas in which I am taking a very close look, and of which I don't think I'm going to have an immediate answer but I feel we must find an answer, is the problem of seeking the answer to the present high cost of school construction. The present method of school construction I don't think can be continued, because I feel that with the open-end procedures we follow today there isn't the kind of control that there should be placed on the cost of construction. And there are a number of alternatives that we're studying now. One of the methods perhaps might be to standardize on some of the schools, perhaps the number of plans and to use the same plans in a number of areas. There• s some merit in those proposals and there is some demerits in those proposals as well.

There is also the question of establishing guidelines which we could get from other provinces which have used similar approaches, and to establish guidelines and criteria and the use of materials and establish in advance and lay out in advance the actual dollar cost of the building before construction is started. And I'm looking at the possibility of accepting proposals from the construction trade with regard to certain buildings or certain schools that might be required and as required. We are also thinking that perhaps instead of the school division being the prime builder and the employer of the architect, perhaps the province should build the schools and turn them over to the school division. Now I'm just throwing these out and members opposite may jump on them if they will, but I'm throwing them out simply to indicate that these are some of the areas and perhaps members opposite can give me some other proposals because I certainly am looking for suggestions. They're not firmed up yet; we have not finalized, we simply are recognizing the fact that we must seek an answer to the high cost of construction.

You know it has often been said, Mr. Chairman, that my department is a bottomless pit in terms of spending the taxpayers' money, and there are certainly grounds for such a description when we consider the problem of rising costs on school construction alone, the one I just referred to. But in seeking to keep costs down we can never become over-zealous in terms of allowing the quality of Manitoba's educational system to lag. We cannot afford to do that and I don't think any member of this House would suggest that we do that. Those are the two foremost goals of a contradictory nature that we must strive for - economy and efficiency on the one hand and yet a program that will meet the needs of our people and our teachers, adults and citizens of Manitoba.

Mr. Chairman, these are my preliminary remarks, if you want to call them preliminary. I'm sure members opposite will have some comments to make on them and hopefully I'll be able to give them some of the answers which I know that they're waiting for. Thank you.