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instructional cadre and the supplies. The city of Saint John will provide the training and sleeping facilities on the training site where extra buildings and a canteen are being erected.

Mr. McKAY: Mr. Chairman, I don't know if your department has these figures or not, but what is the average cost per student for the upgrading of education through a Community College course?

Hon. Mr. MERRITHEW: These courses are computed on the different lengths and on the funding by man days. In the trades, it is \$16.81 a day; trades outside the trade schools, \$11.26; upgrading, \$8.53, and upgrading outside trade schools, \$5 per day.

Mr. McKAY: So it is between \$5 and \$16 per day. I assume that the average, including the upgrading and trade courses, is around \$10 a day. I am trying to compare it with the cost per pregraduate student in a school situation which, according to last year's annual report, was between \$900 and \$1,000 per student. This means that the cost per student involved in these upgrading courses, trade schools, and so on, is around \$2,000 per year on the same number of student days.

The point I wish to make is that I believe the Community College institutions that we have are vital if we are ever to find our place in the sun, so to speak, as far as industrial growth in this province is concerned. However, I find that in many cases the Community College will be required to take on students who have dropped out of school and offer them upgrading courses. I sometimes think, and I am sure the minister agrees, that it would be more practical to make a greater effort to keep these students in school, rather than have them drop out and then attempt to encourage them to take upgrading courses later on when the cost would be greater.

I don't know what the answer is, but I feel that if we could keep these young people in school until they received a training in something it would be better.

Mr. CLAVETTE, after items under Vote 61-02 in the supplementary estimates had been read: Mr. Chairman, would you explain the item, Contracts and Projects, \$1,500,000?

Hon. Mr. MERRITHEW: That covers the program for pipefitters and welders at the Saint John Dry Dock.

Mr. KANE: Is there anything under this vote for capital expenditure?

Hon. Mr. MERRITHEW: We are coming to that, Mr. Chairman. It is the continued extension of the Institute of Technology.

Mr. KANE, after Vote 61-50, Capital Account, main estimates, had been read: Mr. Chairman, is all this \$4 million for the extension of the Institute of Technology in Saint John?

Hon. Mr. MERRITHEW: Yes, that completes the project, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CLAVETTE: Mr. Chairman, where is the money for the acquisition of Bathurst College?

Hon. Mr. MERRITHEW: That item is in the supplementary estimates, Capital Account.

Mr. SIMARD: Mr. Chairman, I am sorry I had to be absent from the House, but when was the Manpower needs committee formed, what is its function, and what is the regional input in that committee?

Hon. Mr. MERRITHEW: Mr. Chairman, the Federal-Provincial Manpower Needs Committee is composed of the Deputy Minister of Labour, with representatives from Economic Growth, Social Services, the New Brunswick Community College, the regional director and staff, and one member of the Cabinet Secretariat.

Mr. SIMARD: Did you say that it was a federal Manpower Needs Committee?

Hon. Mr. MERRITHEW: It is a federal-provincial committee.

Mr. SIMARD: Are there any representatives of the regional Community College Board in this committee?

Hon. Mr. MERRITHEW: The chairman of the Community College Board, Mr. Thompson, is on that committee.

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Mr. KANE: Mr. Chairman, are you going to supply me with a list of this year's additional courses and where they are being held?

Hon. Mr. MERRITHEW: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I would ask hon. members to turn to page 29 of the supplementary estimates, Capital Account, Vote 61-50.

Mr. KANE, after the vote had been read: Mr. Chairman, could we have a breakdown of this?

Hon. Mr. MERRITHEW: There is no breakdown, Mr. Chairman. That is to retire the debt of the Collège de Bathurst.

Mr. CLAVETTE: Mr. Minister, does this mean that even if you recover the debt there won't be any renovations relative to providing new courses at Collège de Bathurst?

Hon. Mr. MERRITHEW: Mr. Chairman, there is no money for renovations this year, but in the supplementary estimates, Ordinary Account, under Personal Services we have \$128,000; Other Services, \$82,000; Materials and Supplies, \$25,000, and that is for maintenance and operating costs of the college.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: That concludes the estimates for the New Brunswick Community College.

Hon. Mr. MERRITHEW: Mr. Chairman, before we go on, I would like to express my thanks to the director of the Community College, Mr. Thompson, and to his staff directly, also those people who, with a great deal of loss of their own personal and leisure time, served on the board of governors and the regional boards. We are very appreciative of the efforts they have all put forward.

Department of Education

Mr. CHAIRMAN called for consideration of the estimates of the Department of Education.

Hon. Mr. MERRITHEW, after items under Vote 20-01, Administration, had been read: Mr. Chairman, this represents the first time that I have had the opportunity to discuss my portfolio with all hon. members on a collective basis since assuming the responsibilities for Education late last year and I welcome this opportunity to discuss the estimates relating to this department's projected expenditures for this fiscal year.

If you will permit me, Mr. Chairman, I would like to turn to some general comments on the department—the issues, the problems and a report on the status of various programs and projects under way in the public school system of this province. Many of these programs were announced in this committee by my predecessor, the Hon. J. Lorne McGuigan, last April and I believe it will be of interest to the committee if I outline the progress to date. I am referring specifically to programs relating to the introduction of kindergartens, second language training, special education and the reorganization of the Department of Education.

Priorities in government are continually changing to meet the needs of New Brunswickers. We have extremely difficult decisions to make the selection among these competing priorities. In education the clientele is declining at present after long-term growth patterns. Needs of the aged, health care systems, housing programs, economic development and job creating activities all require more resources to meet the stated goals in these fields. Consequently, we must be in a position to maximize the use of funds placed at the disposal of the department. We must realize as well that financial resources are scarce and very likely could become more scarce in the future as demands for government services increase.

In the light of known trends relating to enrolments we must be cautious in our educational planning. We must explore new ways of accomplishing results in our schools, both now during this period of student decline and later as enrolments begin to increase. Both declines and increases in enrolments present challenges which must be met through long-term planning and consultation. At the same time, we must be careful to maintain or improve the high standard of education we have come to expect in this province.

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It is my belief that the taxpayers of New Brunswick will welcome a reappraisal of educational priorities and a reallocation of educational resources to meet their identified needs. The traditional and incremental systems of resource allocation must give way to more effective budgeting systems. My department will dedicate itself to this task over the next several years.

I should now like to draw to the attention of the House very briefly some of the major thrusts the department is taking in certain areas. Perhaps the most important of these is the reorganization of the Department of Education itself.

Last year the broad general guidelines for reorganization of the department were announced in the Legislative Assembly. This reorganization had been studied and discussed for more than a decade with several major reports presented on the subject. The report of the minister's committee on educational planning, called Education Tomorrow, outlined an acceptable organization, and government, with few exceptions, accepted these recommendations.

Introducing change to an organization is a complex and sensitive process. For the past year, work has been proceeding to implement the new organization smoothly and effectively. For the sake of clarity it was decided to divide the reorganization process into three stages—Phase I, Phase II and Phase III.

Phase I was to deal with the senior personnel in the department down to the director level and required engaging or transferring individuals to positions which did not exist previously. This phase has been completed since I have taken office and the department has begun implementation of Phase II.

Phase II involves professional and clerical support staff at the departmental level. This phase will be submitted shortly to Treasury Board.

Phase III recognizes the need to assist school districts in meeting their local priorities and will involve extensive consultation over the next several years. This phase will include an in-depth study of district resources to ensure that proper allocations are being made to meet the district needs within the financial capability of the province.

The changes in the department formalize the concept of two separate educational services divisions—one serving the Anglophone language group and the other serving the Francophone language group. In addition, these divisions contain new branches of special education services, evaluation and second language services to improve and consolidate our efforts in these important fields. I expect to be able to elaborate on the roles and functions of these and other branches during the detailed study of these estimates.

I would now like to clarify some of the misunderstandings relating to staffing and the number of personnel employed directly by the Department of Education. First, the department has 228 permanent positions listed on its establishment for 1975-76 compared to 221 the previous year. The increase relates to changes made during Phase I of the reorganization.

Second, the decision to eliminate the regional offices of the department involved the reassignment of 69 positions previously allocated to this function. We have established an interdepartmental committee to review individual files with the hope of finding suitable alternatives for all persons involved in this particular change. To date most personnel in these regional offices have been reassigned satisfactorily and the process will continue until reassignment is complete. For 1975-76 estimates purposes the bulk of these unassigned positions has been shown under Vote 20-01, Administration. It should be noted that Vote 20-43 in last year's estimates, called Regional Superintendents, no longer appears in the estimates.

Third, many areas of the department were not staffed or were understaffed in the past. For example, the Francophone educational services division did not have the required consultants to perform their innovative role in educational planning and leadership. Our Phase II proposals recognize this fact and submissions to Treasury Board will request additional positions to make this area operational and effective. Another example is related to our Buildings and Administration Branches. Both of these areas will require increased expertise if we are to protect the investment of the taxpayers of the province.

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To accomplish the reorganization and strengthening of selected areas, we are prepared to scale down the less important functions of the department to ensure that the net increase in staff is kept to a minimum. And, I might add, our long-term objective will be to have a smaller, more professional, more flexible establishment to enable us to meet the changing needs.

In the short term, because of legal and moral obligations to individuals presently in the system, it may be necessary to increase our establishment. Before this is done, however, I would like to assure this committee that every effort will be made to reassign individuals and vacant positions to the areas of greatest need. I am attaching a copy of the interim organizational chart of the department for the benefit of all members. An outline is also included in the annual report of the department.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to turn now to some brief comments on specific projects of interest which are currently under way by my department.

Kindergartens — The task force report for kindergarten design will be placed on the desks of the members today. This report should not be considered—and I repeat, should not be considered—government policy at this time. It has been circulated to all school districts as a study document and will be presented for further study at the New Brunswick Education Conference to be held in Moncton in June 1975—next week, I believe. I must say I am very pleased with the progress of the kindergarten task force and would like to commend the members of this committee for an excellent working document on kindergarten design.

I have announced previously the selection of eight pilot classes for kindergartens to be undertaken during 1975-76. The sites for these pilot classes were selected according to a number of factors, including language, geographic location and different life styles, to provide us with a representative cross section of the province. In addition, there will be a joint pilot project class held at the University of New Brunswick, involving university and departmental personnel. This project will be used as a training area for both in-service and pre-service purposes.

We cannot, at this time, predict the exact date upon which kindergarten classrooms will be available in every district of the province. This will depend upon the priorities of the particular school districts as well as the availability of resources, both human and financial. However, we do expect a broader implementation pattern in September 1976 and we may be assured that the materials and structures will be available at that time.

Special Education — Since the tabling of the White Paper, Opportunities for the Handicapped, the department has established branches for special educational services within the two educational divisions. It is hoped that the beginning of a small professional staff can be employed during the fiscal year 1975-76. This development has been integrated with the overall departmental reorganization so that a service delivery system for our handicapped children will be included in the basic educational program.

Last year this House was told that the department would provide sponsoring societies under the Auxiliary Classes Act, with additional finances to operate their transportation systems. I am happy to report that 21 societies were assisted during the year. In addition, pilot projects in tutoring for handicapped pupils were established in three school districts.

Some effort has been made to service the province's special education programs through the use of short-term field consultants. Two consultants employed during the year were able to work with several school districts and the results of this work have been most encouraging.

Throughout the year a good deal of time has been devoted to the establishment of the Atlantic Special Education Authority. This new approach to specialized education for visually and/or hearing handicapped children was formalized earlier this year through the signing of an agreement among the four Atlantic Provinces, and a bill is presently before this House. I am pleased to report to this House that a basic principle of operation for the Authority will be

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that, whenever possible, a handicapped child will be educated as close to his home community as is possible. Although the Authority is just beginning to become operational, one of the priorities to be considered will be the development of services for Francophone visually impaired children.

We are pleased that the four provinces of Atlantic Canada will cooperatively develop specialized services for handicapped children. Such services will include identification and assessment, preschool, elementary and secondary schooling as well as opportunities for vocational training. These services would be far too costly for any single province to establish and maintain; however, with four provinces participating, we will serve larger groups of children at a lower per pupil cost.

As we move toward the second year of implementation of the White Paper on the Handicapped emphasis will continue to be placed on encouraging sponsoring societies to move closer to the school districts. Amendments to the Auxiliary Classes Act will provide school districts with the legal right to become societies under the Act. This right was taken away from school boards in 1967. It is being returned this year as another step in the process of normalization for handicapped pupils.

Another project which will be introduced during the school year 1975-76 will be a learning/diagnostic centre. This will be operated in conjunction with school district services, as well as community-based services. The project will focus on the identification and remediation of children's learning problems. While many pupils will be helped throughout the year, this project will also provide information which will be vital for future establishment of educational diagnostic services.

All of the efforts which I have mentioned require a corps of highly skilled professionals. These specialists are not readily available and, therefore, we will not be able to provide either the variety of special services or the numbers of personnel in a specific speciality as quickly as we would like; however, we are determined to make a start. Through careful planning and well-organized pilot projects, we can lay the foundation for a first-rate service delivery system for handicapped school-age children.

Second Language Training — Mr. Chairman, as announced in April 1974, two special projects for second language training at the junior high school level were established in Tracadie and Newcastle. These projects provided programs which ensured stress on the spoken language and sufficient trained personnel. A full-time coordinator at the district level was employed to supervise the project.

Evaluation is beginning on these projects and will be available after a three-year period. In the interim, similar projects have been approved for two additional districts for the 1975-76 school year. I am pleased to announce that Caraquet in District No. 5 and Moncton in District No. 15 have been selected for this expansion. In addition to these projects, two school districts presently have French pilot projects at levels 1 and 2.

There are 47 immersion classes now operating in the province ranging from level 1 to 7 and serving 1,112 students. The numbers are expected to increase during 1975-76 as more parents request that their children receive more adequate and effective instruction in French.

Mr. Chairman, in the field of teacher training the department is working closely with New Brunswick universities to provide opportunities for second language teachers to become more fluent in the language they are teaching. In cooperation with the federal government, New Brunswick will issue 27 fellowships worth \$2,000 each to be awarded to university students wishing to improve their command of the second language by studying in that language at a Canadian university for one year.

Travel grants are also available to minority language students unable to study in their own province. These grants cover two round trips per student per year, but are not available to students receiving fellowships. In addition, 110 summer school bursaries will be granted to enable second language and minority language teachers to upgrade their qualifications in linguistics, second language methodology and related fields.

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Space Utilization Study — The space utilization task force has completed its data gathering survey of all public educational facilities in the province. Each school board was given the opportunity to contribute information and comments to the task force. The draft reports have been forwarded to each school district and further meetings will be held with boards to ensure that the identified needs are in keeping with local priorities. It is my hope that this study will provide the department with a comprehensive information base from which a rational long-term plan for future construction of schools can be derived.

Removal of Textbook Rental Fees — Mr. Chairman, I wish to announce the removal of textbook rental fees of \$5 that the department charged to all pupils in Grades 9 to 12 every September. The reduction in revenue will far outweigh the frustrations that the collection of rental fees brought to teachers, administrators and parents.

Basic Program Definition — Mr. Chairman, given the realities of limited resources, we must be in a position to assign funds to the priorities which have been identified in keeping with the objectives of providing equity throughout the province. It is our belief that the definition and costing of a basic program for education will assist in this task. We must know what we want the system to achieve and at what cost. A committee, involving the school districts' administration and trustees, the Teachers' Federation and the department, is preparing a position paper on this subject for discussion later this year.

Community Use of Schools — Last year a report was tabled in the Legislature on the community use of schools. The government has accepted the principle that schools are community facilities and should be utilized to their full potential for a wide range of public related activities. Guidelines for their use are now in preparation and I am hopeful that new approaches can be found to facilitate and encourage school use after regular teaching hours. It should be mentioned, however, that for the most part user charges should be established to ensure that fair treatment for all user groups is maintained. For that reason, consultation with other departments and municipalities will be necessary, and, of course, this is being done.

General Educational Development Tests — I had the pleasure to announce several weeks ago the initiation of the general educational development tests which will enable adults who have not completed high school to receive 12th year equivalency by passing a series of adult equivalency tests. These tests will be offered in both official languages at various centres throughout the province. Incidentally, we are the first province to offer them in both languages.

Community Colleges — Mr. Chairman, even though we have gone through the estimates on this, I feel I should make a statement at this time.

The Community College is preparing young people for direct entry into the world of work and providing older people with the opportunity to improve both education and employability. The educational programs offered by the Community Colleges are intended to reflect the present and future manpower needs of the province.

The trade schools and the institutes of technology are the main operating units of the college. The key to their success must obviously lie in being sensitive to community needs and flexible in planning to meet these needs.

A major step was taken last week in establishing improved opportunities for Francophone technology instruction when our government announced that they would purchase the property and buildings of the Collège de Bathurst, as recommended in the LeBel Committee Report to the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission.

New Brunswick Library Service — Mr. Chairman, this branch continues to expand its service to the general public of the province. This year public libraries will be opened in Tracadie, Chipman and Chatham, adding to the existing system of 35 public libraries and seven bookmobiles. We recognize that libraries serving the public and libraries serving the schools are different in many respects and we are attempting to meet these varied needs in an effective and cooperative manner.

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Mr. Chairman, this concludes my general remarks prior to the detailed study of the estimates of the Department of Education. I recognize the complex nature of education in New Brunswick and realize that I may have inadvertently omitted some subjects which hon. members may wish discussed in more detail. However, I know that the hon. members across the floor have never been noted for shyness and I expect that pertinent questions will be raised during the detailed study period to follow. I will attempt, to the best of my ability, to answer all your questions.

Mr. Chairman, as with the estimates of the other two departments I have guided through the House, perhaps it would be helpful to the members opposite if I could make a few comments on each of the votes as we come to them. It might save a few questions.

Vote 20-01 includes last year's Vote 20-01, Administration, and Vote 20-43, Regional Superintendents.

The administration of the finance section is responsible for the overall operation of the department and next year will have a complement of 79 positions. This figure will, no doubt, change during the year due to the reorganization taking place within the department. Included in this complement are the minister, two deputy ministers, executive assistant to the deputy, three assistant deputy ministers, together with the necessary secretarial positions.

This branch also includes departmental administration, school districts financial services, and a computer services section. Other areas of responsibility include the public school equipment, school textbooks and audio-visual services, although these areas have separate votes. Also included in this vote, although administered by the Coordinator of Kindergartens, is \$270,000 covering the kindergarten pilot projects.

The administration section is responsible for the department's overall budget, together with overall accounting which includes the departmental payroll, accounts payable and receivable, and the general administration of the department.

The school district financial services section is responsible for the administration of the overall centralized payroll, together with pupil transportation. This is an all-encompassing section, Mr. Chairman.

The computer-services section is responsible for advising senior departmental officials on the use of the computer for the planning and developing of EDP systems required by the department. At the present time this section is responsible for a number of programs, including centralized district payroll—we pay all the teachers centrally—educational statistics, student scheduling, textbook inventory and school bus scheduling.

The Kindergarten Task Force has completed its study and submitted a report to the Department of Education. This report is currently receiving study by departmental officials and it will be passed out today. It is anticipated that a study of the report will indicate further research in the form of pilot classes, research and teacher education.

Sites have been assigned for these pilot projects as well. The objectives of the kindergarten budget should be the evaluation of the proposed program, concurrent with teacher training, and the final availability of the programs for consideration of provincial implementation in September of 1976.

(Translation)

Mr. CLAVETTE: Mr. Chairman, if I may, I would like to make a few comments concerning the minister's speech. In a very conservative manner—and I don't mean conservative in a political sense—he explained certain decisions or positions that his department has taken during the past months, particularly with regard to financial or budgetary restrictions that may possibly have been imposed upon his department.

With respect to government services rendered to the people of New Brunswick, whether in the field of education, health, welfare and so on, it is incumbent upon the government to set priorities, and we, as members of the opposition, must ask questions concerning the decisions made in this respect, as well as those concerning the organization or administration of a department.

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It is with this thought in mind, Mr. Chairman, that we will try to review your last year of administration and to look into your projections for fiscal 1975-76, taking into consideration the budgetary restrictions which we hope will not result in diminishing the quality of education in New Brunswick. Education is very important to the future of our young people, and even though today we often read in the papers that in different areas governments have made decisions that are quite drastic vis-à-vis the costs of education, I can appreciate that the present economic situation exists at a provincial as well as at a national and international level. As I said, it is incumbent upon the government to decide where their priorities lie, and in discussing these we must bear in mind the amount of money the government is ready to allocate to a particular service, in this case, education.

I might mention that although the minister's speech clarified several points I had in mind, it raised questions regarding other matters, and I trust you will understand that when we, as members of the opposition, ask questions pertaining to these estimates it is because we want to do our share in seeing that the quality of education in our province will not be reduced and, at the same time, make sure that the taxpayers' money shall be spent wisely.

Mr. Minister, may I ask what studies your department has undertaken during the past year, whether or not these have been completed, and whether you intend to implement any of the recommendations proposed? Also, have you formed any committees at the school board level concerning space utilization of our schools?

(English)

Mr. KANE: Mr. Chairman, before the minister answers, may I ask if he could supply us with three or four copies of his breakdown of each vote? It might save a lot of questions.

Hon. Mr. MERRITHEW: Mr. Chairman, unfortunately, we just have one set of books for ourselves, but I would be pleased to have those copied and made available to you on Monday.

Mr. Chairman, in the Department of Education there is a great deal going on in terms of internal studies, meetings with other departments, and so on. Our staff is meeting presently with the Department of Youth with regard to the school dropout situation; the kindergarten committees have been meeting regularly and their report will be passed to you today; a space utilization study, again internal, is ongoing; the Phase I report on the reorganization of the department has been implemented and the Phase II report is presently before Treasury Board.

We have met with other departments on the community use of schools because we feel, and rightly so, that the whole onus of the costs involved here should not fall upon the Department of Education budget.

I established a committee to look into the hot lunch program in schools in conjunction with the Department of Health and other agencies of government. Also, we had a multiagency committee trying to find positions for the regional superintendents and their staffs who were displaced because of our closing out the regional offices. There are probably dozens of others which I am forgetting—the basic education program study, for example.

Mr. CLAVETTE: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

With regard to the MacLeod-Pinet report, Education Tomorrow, are you in a position now to tell us the cost of implementing the recommendations of that report?

Hon. Mr. MERRITHEW: Mr. Chairman, because of the breadth of that particular report it would be extremely difficult to give you such information. In fact, some of the recommendations are being phased in over the years and we don't know what the costs are going to be now in terms of any particular service. This has never been really costed in terms of each of the recommendations.

Mr. CLAVETTE: Referring to the closing of the regional offices, did you say that all the personnel in those offices were taken over by the department?

Hon. Mr. MERRITHEW: Mr. Chairman, no, there were 69 people concerned