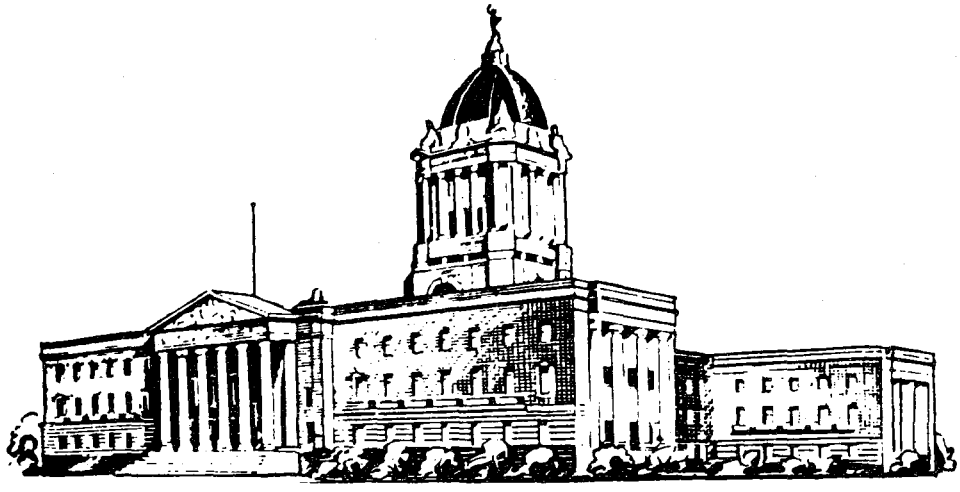
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Chairman

Mr. D. James Walding
Constituency of St. Vital



TUESDAY, July 4, 1978, 10:00 a.m.

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Hearing Of The Standing Committee
On
Public Accounts
Tuesday, July 4, 1978

Time: 10:00 a.m.

CHAIRMAN: Mr. D. James Walding.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have a quorum, gentlemen. The committee will come to order. I would refer the attention of honourable members to the Supplement to the Public Accounts, Page 168. Mr. Craik.

MR. CRAIK: I wonder if I could just mention at this point that this meeting of the Public Accounts hopefully will give us a chance to wind up the accounts but in the event that we don't wind up the accounts, I wanted to indicate that there probably will not be another meeting called for the purposes of examining the 1976-77 accounts which we are looking at here. The next meeting of this committee which is likely to get called would be sometime next fall soon after the accounts for 1977-78 are published for the purposes of examining those accounts. I mention this just in case there are any questions that you want to get filed for answer in the interim period, that this will be the opportunity at which to have those filed, otherwise there won't be another opportunity.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Cherniack.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Chairman, when we were dealing with the Executive Council Estimates, it was indicated that we would be getting the first quarterly unaudited statement for this fiscal year soon, like this week I believe. May I ask, will we get it this week and, if so, will there be any opportunity to discuss it?

MR. CRAIK: Mr. Chairman, I think that it may be ready by Friday. If it's not ready by Friday, it will be available by next week. I indicated at Public Accounts, I think it was Thursday night, that . . .

MR. CHERNIACK: At Estimates.

MR. CRAIK: . . . at Estimates on Thursday night at the Executive Council, that it would be ready in about a week. It may be ready Friday, if not, it will be ready next week.

MR. CHERNIACK: The second part of my question, Mr. Chairman. Will there be any opportunity to discuss it?

MR. CRAIK: Well, it wasn't the intent to call Public Accounts for that purpose. There may be opportunity to discuss it, questions in the House and so on, but it wasn't the intent to call Public Accounts for that purpose because it deals with a different year than we're dealing with here.

MR. CHERNIACK: Well, Mr. Chairman, of course this is Public Accounts Committee. It's not any particular year; this is the committee. May I ask whether there will be a statement, audited or unaudited, for the balance sheet for the last fiscal year before all of the Public Accounts are filed as published. In other words, will there be a statement of income and disbursements for the last fiscal year and the balance sheet soon and, if so, how soon?

MR. CRAIK: Well, I'm not sure, maybe I'm missing Mr. Cherniack's question but the statement will be an unaudited year-end statement that comes out within the next week.

MR. CHERNIACK: Well, Mr. Chairman, there are two different statements I was asking about. The first one was for the first quarter of this fiscal year.

MR. CRAIK: Oh, I'm sorry, yes.

MR. CHERNIACK: The other is the unaudited or approximate or estimated or completed statemen for last fiscal year and not published as we are accustomed to seeing it but rather in a form whicl will just give the Receipts and Expenditures for the last fiscal year, and an approximate Balance Sheet. Will that be available, and if so, how soon?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Craik.

MR. CRAIK: Well, maybe I was putting the wrong interpretation on it, Mr. Chairman. The reports that will be out next week, possibly Friday, but let's say next week, will be the year end March 31, 1978, statement. That will be for the full year's operation — it will be an unaudited statement. The June 30, 1978, which will be the first quarter statement for 1978-79, we'll plan as a general rule to have it out roughly one month after the quarter ends, which would put it around the end of July or first of August.

MR. CHERNIACK: Okay, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Can we proceed? (Pages 168 to 174 were read and passed.) Page 175 — Mr. Wilson.

MR. ROBERT G. WILSON(Wolseley): Mr. Chairman, I wondered if Mr. Ziprick might be able to supply me, or someone supply me, the number or possibly — I'm looking at the Ehrlo Ranch in Regina, Saskatchewan, $172,928.00 — I understand that it's for sending problem juveniles to Saskatchewan. I wondered if I could find out how many juveniles this covers, a breakdown of it mainly? I'll leave that with you. What I'm trying to get at is, what is the cost per juvenile to send them to Regina to this ranch, so I'll get that if you give me the figures?

Mr. Chairman, through you to the Minister, if he could just tell me what it's for, supply the information then I'll be able to ask further questions of the Minister who is in charge of that, possibly the Corrections?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Craik.

MR. CRAIK: Well, we can get you further breakdown on that amount.

MR. WILSON: Fine, that's fine. ill we be getting, Mr. Chairman, through you to the Minister, will we be getting an opportunity at the end of this grey book to recap, through you and to Mr. Ziprick, some areas of concern for the next time we meet? What I'm suggesting is we're meeting here this morning to go through the cash payments, and at the end of that we'll be adjourning, and I wondered if we would get a chance to put on the record some areas that we touched upon last meeting?

MR. CRAIK: Well, Mr. Chairman, if it applies to the mechanisms or methodology used in keeping the Public Accounts, that's fine, but if it refers to the specific items, and whether or not they were appropriately spent moneys, then I think that sort of opportunity, the individual member would want to take, whenever the time arises — it wouldn't necessarily be at this Committee — but the purposes of the Committee at this stage would be primarily to comment on whether the procedures of keeping the accounts are adequate or whether there are some suggestions for changes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Page 175 — Mr. Cherniack.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Chairman, I want to know who Henry J. Einarson is, for some $3,000.00 — $3,733.00. Mr. Einarson thinks he's the one, and I don't think so.

MR. CRAIK: The members are all sprinkled through it.

MR. MINAKER: I'm sure that Harry J. Enns is down.

MR. CRAIK: We're all in here somewhere. You'll probably find your own name there.

MR. CHERNIACK: This can't be Mr. Einarson.

MR. CRAIK: It probably is.

MR. CHERNIACK: Of Winnipeg.

MR. MINAKER: That's your expenses, isn't it, for staying in a hotel —(Interjection)— Living allowance.

MR. CHERNIACK: All right. I'll drop that. Mr. Einarson thinks he is the one; okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Page 175.

MR. CRAIK: Saul, you're on Page 165.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 175—pass; Page 176 — Mr. Wilson.

MR. WILSON: What basically I'm looking for, Mr. Chairman, is F.G. Bradley. It's been suggested to me that Bradley took over the assets of a company that the Provincial Government was involved with, a company called Dent's or something, and I wondered, does the government have any interest in F.G. Bradley? Do we have any shares or any loans out to this particular company? Possibly by getting a breakdown, would I be able to find out is it coded, would I be able to find out if it's true what some of the meat salesmen say, that the Provincial Government is giving F.G. Bradley more than its share of business? Would I find that under some coding, would it have a breakdown of all the — In other words, Canada Packers, Swifts, Bradley's, Schneiders.

If you remember, Mr. Chairman, through you to the Minister, under Taxis I was able to get a breakdown. I wondered if under the purchases of — I guess this would be foodstuffs that we're purchasing, prepared meats, whether they be steaks or whatever . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Page 184—pass; Page 185—pass; Page 186—pass; Page 187 — Mr. Wilson.

MR. WILSON: Mr. Chairman, through you, on Page 187, the Henderson Regional Library, I wonder if you could explain the $100,000 purchase? Could I have a breakdown of that? I note with interest that in 1975 we only spent $3,200; I wondered why the sudden increase. Would this be for the purchase of Henderson Directories, and if so, why would it be necessary to have one of these in every government department?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Craik.

MR. CRAIK: We can get a breakdown on that; I doubt if it's Henderson Directories, it's more likely to be a regional library on Henderson Highway, but I don't know that, so I could be dead wrong.

MR. WILSON: In other words, there is an item for Henderson Directories in Vancouver. This is probably for one of our local libraries is what you are saying.

MR. CRAIK: I think it's a grant probably to a library.

MR. WILSON: Surely, okay.

MR. CRAIK: But we'll get that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Page 187—pass; Page 188—pass; Page 189 — Mr. Wilson.

MR. WILSON: On the last several meetings, I had asked Mr. Ziprick if he was reviewing the purchases of medical supplies and under Imperial Surgical, I was wondering, rather than put the department to the trouble, I was wondering if Mr. Ziprick had done anything further on that. Is this an examination of an old policy or was there any thought given to the suggestions I made at that time?

MR. ZIPRICK: Well, we're still in the process of checking into it and we'll have a report in due course.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (Pages 189 to 193 were read and passed.) Page 194 — Mr. Wilson.

MR. WILSON: Under the 16mm and 18mm films, Kepron's $63,735.68, I had spoken, through you Mr. Chairman, last time about a problem that I was looking at under Ministers' Estimates pertaining to the purchases of films and I wondered if I could have a breakdown of this item.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (Pages 194 to 197 read and passed.) Page 198 — Mr. Orchard.

MR. ORCHARD: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I'm questioning the nature of the Law Society of Manitoba, the $250,000.00. Is that an annual expenditure or what's the nature of the expenditure there?

MR. CRAIK: Well, we'll get a breakdown on it. I think it was discussed here perhaps once before — somewhere anyway. The money from the trust funds comes to the government and a certain proportion of the interest on the t ust fund money comes to the government for the purposes of, partially at least, financing Legal Aid, but there's a grant goes back to the Law Society for an education fund, I believe it is, that they carry on some activity in. But we'll get . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Page 198—pass; Page 199 — Mr. Orchard.

MR. ORCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under Legal Aid Services Society of Manitoba, there is $2 million-plus expenditure. I just more or less want clarification on this. Say dealing in this particular year, did that appear under the Attorney-General's Estimates and is shown here as an expenditure specific to Legal Aid?

MR. ZIPRICK: I would say most of this would appear in the Attorney-General's Estimates in a transfer of money to Legal Aid for those expenditures.

MR. ORCHARD: Also, would that represent then the total funding that the government would have toward Legal Aid? In other words, let's say that three departments were putting money into Legal Aid, would all three departments' expenditures, if they did occur, would they be lumped into one payment for . . .?

MR. ZIPRICK: No, this is not necessarily one payment. This could be a number of payments but this here is an accumulation of all the payments made to Legal Aid regardless of what appropriation or money transferred from trust or any other source.

MR. ORCHARD: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (Pages 199 to 205 were read and passed.) Page 206 — Mr. Wilson.

MR. WILSON: Mr. Chairman, would the Minister give me a breakdown of the Maritime Industries Limited in Burnaby, B.C.?

MR. CRAIK: Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (Pages 206 to 208 were read and passed.) Page 209 — Mr. Wilson.

MR. WILSON: Could I have a breakdown of the Medical Products Institute of Winnipeg? Through you, Mr. Chairman, to Mr. Ziprick, I I had asked for an evaluation of this some time ago because apparently this is a sort of a one-man operation whose job it is to review new discoveries in the province and report to the government. I wondered if you might look at the possibility of seeing if this expenditure is really necessary. I'll have a breakdown of this in the meantime.

MR. ZIPRICK: Well, we're in the process of reviewing the purchasing procedures of the equipment and the various medical expenses. We will also take a look at this. But as to the question of whether it's necessary, this is a decision largely of the government and if it's felt that such work needs to be done, it's voted and properly approved. I don't think that we have any comment unless it was a grossly inefficient way of doing it but we certainly wouldn't question the judgment of the officials and get involved in an argument as to which is the best way to look after medical expendituies and services.

MR. WILSON: Well, I guess what I'm doing is putting on the record my concern that this particular expenditure under the past government really did not serve any useful purpose.

MR. CMAIRMAN: Mr. Cherniack.$

MR. CHERNIACK: I don't remember the record that well, did the honourable member question the Minister during the Estimates to see what the nature of this program was and whether it's not being continued and whether there is any knowledge that anyone has outside of the department as to what the nature of this is?

Mr. Chairman, not having received an answer, may I ask the Minister of Finance if he is prepared to have questions as to whether or not an expenditure was involved in a worthwhile program if it's not within his department? In other words, is he prepared to open up Public Accounts for this kind of discussion?

MR. CRAIK: Mr. Chairman, I haven't heard all of the exchange on this but the purpose of Public Accounts is to elicit information that may not be contained in the Accounts that any member may wish to reasonably request and receive within the powers of further breakdowns that exist. I think we agreed last meeting that there are certain standard categories under which information is kept and it's fairly readily obtainable as long as it doesn't involve breaking it out further than standard bookkeeping practice and technique is concerned. If there is a question by a member as to the appropriateness of the expenditure, then it would be referred to either the Minister or, if it's a case of the member wondering whether it's a legitimate expenditure within the laws of the province's Financial Administration Act, then it should be referred to the Auditor.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Chairman, the reason I raise this is that the Auditor has, for the last few years, been suggesting that his department shall go further into managerial evaluations and suggested that managers should be brought before this Committee to review their decisions. Mr. Wilson has asked the Auditor whether he will look into this expenditure that he refers to, to see whether or not it was a worthwhile expenditure. Those aren't his words but it was close enough to it. And I ask that because I think Mr. Ziprick answered him in the context of what I would have expected him to say, but I would like to know whether in future meetings the Minister of Finance is prepared to broaden — what I think is broadening the scope of this Committee — in order to discuss whether or not certain expenditures involving a program are worthwhile or not. That's why I raised it to the Minister of Finance.

MR. CRAIK: Mr. Chairman, if the key word is "worthwhile," that becomes a value judgment which is one that is made by the government of the day, and if it's a question of evaluating the worthwhileness then that's something the Auditor would have some difficulty in dealing with; it's a question that is dealt with by the Minister of the government of the day, primarily.

On that point, I was going to mention sometime during this meeting this morning that there has been a letter circulated to members of this Committee from the Auditor, the Provincial Auditor, indicating suggested changes to his terms of reference and his work, and our intent at the present time would be to have those changes dealt with by the next session of the Legislature. In addition to the letter which the Provincial Auditor has circulated our intention would be to distribute the proposed recommendations or changes to the Provincial Auditor's Acts and to the Financial Administration Act, and that they would be available for examination by this Committee at its sitting, probably in the fall of the year, when it looks at the new accounts. And then we would have the input from the Public Accounts Committee prior to finalizing the legislation in preparation for the next session.

We had initially intended to try and have it all done for this current session but it appeared to be more appropriate in view of the fact that it was taking us a little longer to do many of the things that you think you can do in the first year, but don't. But it also would appear to be appropriate to send it to this Committee for comment prior to the government finalizing the recommended legislation for the next session. So on this question that Mr. Cherniack and Mr. Wilson raise I think we ought to have it fully discussed at this Committee, but not under these accounts; we'll do it under a referral to this Committee for examination prior to any changes in legislation that will affect the role of the Auditor or changes in The Public Administration Act, and I think that would be the place to do it.

MR. CHERNIACK: Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm just looking at the question raised by Mr. Wilson and wondering what procedure there is, or is being contemplated, that could give him an answer as to whether or not a certain expenditure was worthwhile. It seems to me that the only way I know of it coming up would be in the Estimates Review, even though it involved a last year's expenditure, but I think would be in the light of what was spent last year, are you planning to spend some of that this year in that way, and if you're not, have you evaluated last year's expenditure and decided to cut it out? That seems to me the only way I know of that this question can be explored; I never

knew of it as being available in Public Accounts. The Minister, when he answered me said that this was not the kind of review that he thinks a Provincial Auditor would make, but then he said it would be referred to the Minister. And I just want to clarify that I assume he did not mean the Minister of Finance in this Committee but I assume he meant the Minister responsible for the expenditure, and the only place I know of it is in Estimates. So, if I'm wrong in my assessment of the procedure, then I would like the Minister of Finance to correct me, and if I'm not, I don't press him because I don't disagree with what he has said so far.

MR. WILSON: Well, through you, Mr. Chairman, to the Minister. It seems that Mr. Cherniack is hardly correct except, in having read past Public Accounts, going back a number of years it seemed that this was the area where value judgments were questioned, where possible changes for the future were brought up, and government decisions that had been made were questioned in Public Accounts. And one of the reasons I had asked to look at tbe exchanges in other provinces, that had a lot more meetings than our particular Committee does, is that we would be able to see the type of dialogue that takes place and the type of investigation that takes place to see if cash payments made by governments, if decisions made by governments, were subject to question or subject to whether they were practical or not. I can recall very quickly, whether it was the cows that were sold at Headingley Jail, whether it was particular purchases made up north, or procedures for purchases; these were all brought out in Public Accounts, whether it was by Mr. Asper, Mr. Spivak or whoever. Having read the past exchanges, and if I can call them arguments, I'll be very kind, in which members questioned why governments had done certain things. I had imagined, and I guess I will do this between sessions, of course, that to examine the 1976-77 book was to examine the expenditures of the former government so that if there were some doubt that they were a value judgment, as the Minister calls it, that maybe this government could avoid the expenditure, and that's what I felt was the purpose and the exercise of putting questions on the record.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (Pages 209 to 211 were read and passed.) Page 212 — Mr. Wilson.

MR. WILSON: I'm just interested in what MTV Ltd. Winnipeg might be, $97,751.14. If it could be explained to me, I don't necessarily need a breakdown; if you can't give me the answer then I'll request one.

MR. CRAIK: We'll have to look it up, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (Pages 213 to 232 were read and passed.) Page 233 — Mr. Wilson.

MR. WILSON: Under Selkirk Linen Services Inc., in Selkirk, $1,788,176.66 for laundry; I believe this is the laundry that was built several years ago by the government. Is that correct? I guess possibly what I'm looking for here might be best asked under an order for return, but it would seem to me that why would, again, I'd like to put on the record, why would the government take all the laundry from all the hospitals all the way out to Selkirk, with all that extra handling, unless there was some cost-saving? So I will probably ask for an order for return.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (Pages 233 to 238read and passed.) Page 239 — Mr. Wilson.

MR. WILSON: Again, because I haven't got the answer on the examination of the emergency and purchases of medical supplies, I would like a breakdown of Stevens and Son Ltd., $126,937.16? What I'm trying to establish, if I get this list, is to whether these were indeed emergency purchases or not.

MR. CHAIR to N: (Pages 239 were 249read and passed.) Page 250 — Mr. Wilson.

MR. WILSON: I'm sure there's a simple explanation for this, but under Washtronics Ltd., almost $400,000 — the second item. Would this be for purchasing equipment to set up our own carwash equipment in the new government garage, or would this be for washing government cars? It is obvious they are an equipment dealer, so maybe I'll ask for a breakdown and then we will see what it's for.

MR. CIK: Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Page 250—pass; Page 251—pass; Page 252 — Mr. Wilson.

MR. WILSON: Through you to the Minister, Mr. Chairman, would it be possible to — under Wexler's

Furniture — what I'm looking for is the special Welfare Purchases made for welfare recipients, I'm looking to find out how much the government spent on buying furniture for people on social assistance last year. Would there be any coding for that?

MR. CRAIK: Not under that category, I don't believe. We'll just check.

MR. WILSON: What I'm suggesting is that people on social assistance move quite a bit, and there is a provision for, I believe, a once a year purchase for a three-room grouping or — in other words, furnish a home once a year, and I'm interested in seeing the possibility of how much the Provincial Government spends and a list of the people that they deal with because when I was on City Council it was found that City Council was favouring one particular store over the others.

In other words, I believe we work on a voucher system. We give the particular person on social assistance a voucher and they can go out and purchase a fridge to the maximum of $94.50 and so on.

MR. CRAIK: Well, maybe Mr. Ziprick wanted to make coent. I think you would pretty well have to ask the Minister for an explanation of the purchasing procedures.

MR. WILSON: Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Ziprick.

MR. ZIPRICK: I think I can add information here. The procedure, basically, is if the welfare individual is entitled to purchase the equipment themselves, or herself, then they get an allowance, and then they buy just like anybody else, go and buy whatever they feel suits them. On the other hand, if the purchase is being made by the government, then the regular purchasing procedure applies, and the purchase is made under the The Purchase Act, and that's either by tender and/or if it's an emergency purchase, it would be through the Emergency Purchase System. So it would be purchased just like any other kind of purchase, if it was being purchased by the government.

MR. WILSON: Then, what you are suggesting, Mr. Ziprick, is that the recipient is given a voucher and they can go out and shop at any of the particular stores that will sell them a particular appliance within a certain guidelines. Well then, I might ask the question, under what circumstances could you envision the government wanting to deal with a used furniture store?

MR. ZIPRICK: Well, I don't know. You'd have to look at the specifics. But if the government is purchasing furniture and asks for tenders then any furniture store can submit a tender for the sale of furniture, and if it's the lowest tender and the furniture is acceptable, then that's where it's supposed to be bought.

MR. WILSON: That's fine, thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Page 252—pass; Page 253—pass; Page 254 — Mr. Orchard.

MR. ORCHARD: Mr. Chairman, could I get a breakdown on an item, Winston Leathers, Winnipeg, $15,031.00?

MR. CRAIK: Mr. Chairman, while Mr. Orchard is asking questions, could I reply to an earlier question before we're finished. The question regarding the Law Society was, I think, asked before and replied to formerly, that the $250,000 amount that was in earlier, was for the, by agreement, Order-in-Council 808/76. That's 25 percent of the amount received into trust during 1975-76. So the Law Society for their educational program received 25 percent of the trust money.

MR. WILSON: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Page 254—pass; Page 255 — Mr. Orchard.

MR. ORCHARD: At the bottom of the page on 255, two items; Brent Zander, Brian Zander. Could I get a breakout on those two things?

MR. CHAIRMAN: (Pages 255 to 258 That concludes the book Mr Wilson. were read and passed.)

MR. WILSON: I wonder if the Minister might give me some indication . . . he indicated to the Member for St. Johns certain changes that may or may not be taking place. I am a little dissatisfied in looking for some suggestions I had under a certain section of Public Accounts as for the expenses of a particular individual and the trips that were taken out of the province. I got back that in one particular case a suite had been rented from July 1st to August 15th and I had to receive a very vague answer through the news media, and I would like Mr. Ziprick to comment if he is satisfied with the exchange that took place or is there something to be discussed in the future or looked at in the future? Is this the way the usual voucher is turned in for payment, because the answer given by the Member for Burrows was that the suite was used for the Youth Secretariat, and I wondered why it wasn't charged to the particular section of that Estimates, rather than the Minister picking up the tab. In other words, what I am asking Mr. Ziprick is, is he satisfied that that explanation was satisfactory? MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Ziprick.

MR. ZIPRICK: Well, I took a look at the particulars that were presented at that payment for the rental of the suite. It went by inadvertently and normally would be questioned as an item that should go through the departmental expenditures being charged to the appropriation if the suite was being used for government purposes, so this is an unusual item that went through the expenditure without being questioned, but normally would be questioned.

As far as the Minister's expense accounts and procedures are concerned, they are somewhat different than the regular expense accounts. Mana ment Committee of Cabinet has laid down a requirement that doesn't require the Ministers to be as specific with supplying every bit of information in detail, and certain groupings are acceptable. Now the procedure has been to submit these on a regular basis, and as far as our review of them is concerned, if they are reasonable amounts and there is reasonable indication for the purpose of this expense, we certainly have not pursued to ensure that there is a backup voucher for every item. We have always taken the approach that the Ministers positions are somewhat different in that detail, keeping track of the expenses may be somewhat onerous, so I do not consider this Management Committee Minute to be unreasonable and as a result, we have been passing those expense accounts on that basis.

Invariably, over the last number of years, I think just about each year, the Ministers have been required to submit their expense accounts with regard to Orders of Return, so there is an additional scrutiny into that, and so good judgment is applied and stringency of the kind that is required in the others is not completely followed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Wilson.

MR. WILSON: So, very quickly to wrap up then, you are saying that it was sort of passed by. It should have been looked at. But the other one where the Council of Ministers of Education Canada, $250, if the government pays into the Council of Education, shouldn't this $250 — I know it's a small item — shouldn't this have been picked up by the Council? Why should the taxpayers of Manitoba be paying the $250 if we are already giving a large yearly sum? Am I correct in my assumption there, or. . .

MR. ZIPRICK: I am not sure; we'd have to check. An expenditure could be made by the Minister and it could be recovered, so that an expenditure could go through; it could be picked up on a claimable item to another organization, a claim submitted, and the money would come in and be put into revenue, so if this is a recoverable item, then it should have been recovered. If it hasn't been recovered, it was just purely through the departmental oversight in the first instance and then the checking systems didn't pick it up, but if it's a recoverable item, the department is responsible to ensure that all recoverable items are placed on a claim to that particular group or organization that the money is to be recovered from, and then the claim is sent and the recovery is made and the amount received is put into the revenue of the province.

MR. WILSON: Mr. Chairman, so you'll check on it to see whether this is a recoverable item or not?

MR. ZIPRICK: Yes, we can check on it and if it's a recoverable item, we'll ensure that it will be placed for recovery.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there any further questions or comments? Hearing none, we have completed both books of the Public Accounts. Committee rise.