

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, 30 April, 1985.

Time — 8:00 p.m.

### CONCURRENT COMMITTEES OF SUPPLY SUPPLY - MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

**MR. CHAIRMAN, C. Santos:** Committee please come to order.

We are still considering Item No. 4.(a) Municipal Assessments, Salaries; 4.(b) Other Expenditures - the Member for Virden.

**MR. H. GRAHAM:** The Weir Commission recommended an independent assessment authority. Is the Minister prepared to indicate his intentions or whether or not he agrees with that recommendation?

**HON. A. ANSTETT:** Which particular recommendation?

**MR. H. GRAHAM:** The independent assessment authority.

**HON. A. ANSTETT:** It might be of some assistance for honourable members on both sides to have two background papers I've prepared for them on two separate questions, the City of Winnipeg assessment issues and the whole question of assessment reform.

I would like to address the question of the single assessment authority. That has been proposed both by the Weir Committee and by a resolution adopted by the City of Winnipeg.

In my opinion, the authority granted under the act to the provincial-municipal assessor is adequate to assure the uniform application of the law throughout the province. In fact, now that the Weir Committee has brought to light so many areas in which that uniformity did not exist and that we have taken as an initiative the application of that uniformity through discussions with a technical steering committee with the City of Winnipeg assessor.

I don't believe establishing a single assessment authority would do that any quicker. In fact, I think it's just as well that it's done in a co-ordinated way.

I think the problems that would be associated with start-up of a single assessment authority are also very great. I think we should really be applying our total resources both in the city and within our Municipal Assessment Branch to the completion of the assessment reform process and the reassessment activities that are under way in both the city and the rural areas.

I'm not an enthusiast for the single assessment authority. No final decision on that Weir recommendation has been made, but I think it's fair to say in terms of what the member sees in this document that my recommendation would not be a favourable one to my colleagues.

**MR. H. GRAHAM:** Well, Mr. Chairman, I don't see the same start-up problems the Minister has because really

what it does is basically take the existing assessment work and give it a little more freedom. One of the concerns that was expressed before was the fact that the Assessment Branch at the present time is directly under the Minister's jurisdiction. If it had an independent authority, it might be slightly further removed from that particular jurisdiction. I don't see it as being really a bad move. It does give them a greater degree of freedom to operate and naturally, if they did have a degree of independence, they would have to answer to the Legislature in some recognized way and that might be more beneficial than at the present time.

**HON. A. ANSTETT:** Were you finished, Harry?

**MR. H. GRAHAM:** At the present time on that, I was just taking a look at the new . . .

**HON. A. ANSTETT:** Mr. Chairman, the member asks, in effect, two questions then in view of his latter comment.

The first question related to a single assessment authority; I addressed that question in terms of the merger of the two. Then he pursues the other aspect of the Weir recommendation and that was the possibility of it becoming a Crown corporation or a separate independent body. That body would still have to report to a Minister.

I believe the provincial-municipal assessor has a statutory authority, has independence now, and I believe he exercises that independence and I'm not aware of political direction by any Minister as to how he does that job, in terms of what municipalities he's going to assess, how he's going to prescribe the manuals, how he's going to develop the mechanical tools for doing the job.

Certainly, one of the restrictions is the financial resources and staff resources that are placed in the hands of the provincial-municipal assessor and in determining what those resources are is certainly very much a part of the Estimates and Cabinet process. I don't know that I would want to change that, particularly when there is no other source of funds to pay for that process than the ratepayers of the municipalities and the taxpayers who contribute to the provincial revenues, which provide on a 75-25 split respectively, the resources for the provincial-municipal assessor.

But in terms of determining that the R.M. of Springfield is going to be assessed in part this year or that whatever other community is going to be assessed or the manuals or standards, those are reflective of the legislation and the provincial-municipal assessor essentially has a free hand to do that, both under the statute and in terms of being free from any political direction.

I'm not aware that there's ever been any problem in that regard. If there was an inclination to give that kind of direction, I think that could take place in a separate Crown corporation, just as it would in any other organization. In fact, I've never noticed members

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in the opposition, of any political party, not just to the present opposition, suggest that Crown corporations were notoriously free of political influence.

**MR. H. GRAHAM:** Mr. Chairman, what the Minister said, there's a lot of it I agree with. I also agree that by giving it an independent authority, it would more or less be window dressing, but it would give the appearance at least of having a degree of independence. I say that basically maybe, for political reasons, because whenever you get into problems with assessment, a politician by his very nature sometimes does not like to take rather unpopular decisions and unpopular stands. I think that was maybe some of the thinking behind Mr. Weir's suggestion on that respect.

**HON. A. ANSTETT:** Mr. Chairman, I wish to assure the Member for Virden that I am prepared to be politically accountable to the people of Manitoba and to local government for the integrity of the assessment system in this province and the provincial-municipal assessor is prepared to be accountable for following and preserving the integrity of his statutory authority. That is his obligation and that is his job, but the political accountability for the decisions that are made, the legislation, the operation, the financial resources that are placed at the disposal of the provincial-municipal assessor which may some time constraint his ability to do his job as effectively as he would like, I have to accept responsibility for that and I'm here to do that.

I've been prepared to account for that during the full time I've been Minister responsible, at meetings with ratepayers, with councils, with municipal associations, and as late as this morning with the Manitoba Municipal Administrators Association. I have no qualms about political accountability. I think it's an essential component of our parliamentary system and I don't believe a politician prepared to duck hard decisions should be here.

**MR. H. GRAHAM:** Mr. Chairman, can I ask the Minister on the update on the City of Winnipeg assessment issues we just received - he has listed recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. Those are recommendations of the city, am I correct on that?

**HON. A. ANSTETT:** Yes, the member will see under the headline 2 on Page 1, City of Winnipeg submission January 28, 1985, and then underneath, my reply to those recommendations. I believe that at the time members in opposition had a copy of those recommendations because I recall that the Member for St. Norbert did ask me some questions about them early in the Session.

**MR. H. GRAHAM:** Mr. Chairman, can the Minister - and I realize I'm asking him to speculate - give us some indication of the timetable that he has in which he hopes to lift the freeze on equalized assessment?

**HON. A. ANSTETT:** I would think the freeze on equalized assessment can be lifted when we have a uniform, up-to-date assessment for the whole province so that, in effect, the values are based on the same criteria everywhere and there's no need to in any way

adjust figures. That will probably occur soon after the City of Winnipeg has completed reassessment. The date of that the member should seek from the city council.

**MR. H. GRAHAM:** Earlier this afternoon, I believe we had come to a general belief, I guess is the best word, that we expected that the completion of that work would occur some time in September or October of this fall. On that basis, is it right to assume that we can expect to see the freeze on equalized assessment lifted in time for next year's notices and budgets that will be set for next year?

**HON. A. ANSTETT:** Mr. Chairman, no. Clearly, the actual doing of the reassessment is one thing, but the implementation of the reassessment so that the education support levy, for example, which is a province-wide levy, is being levied equally, both in all parts of the City of Winnipeg and on the rest of the province - in other words, equally in terms of being on the same value base, 20 percent in 1975 or 100 percent of 1985 or whatever the up-to-date base will be, when all assessments are introduced on a uniform basis.

When we begin the next cycle of reassessment outside the City of Winnipeg, obviously that'll be on a more recent set of values than 20 percent of 1975. It would be my hope, though, that when we have everybody at that level, we'll be in a position to introduce assessment reform and, through computers, get annual or biannual updating. Once we reach that stage, there's no need for equalization or for balanced assessment; both are then by the boards.

If the member wishes, I'm prepared to go out on a limb and say I think that will be possible before the end of this decade. The computerization will be in place so that we can begin to do this, in terms of being able to put 500,000 roll entries in the new system by the summer of 1987.

I think the bottom line is I hope to remove the freeze as soon as possible. If it's possible to remove it before that, we'll certainly do it. I think the freeze is - in the long term - a stop-gap measure that is inherently undesirable.

**MR. H. GRAHAM:** Everyone agrees on that. Mr. Chairman, is it asking too much to ask the Minister at the present time what direction he is leaning towards for implementation? Is he planning a phased-in program over two or three years, or is it going to be a full implementation once everything is in place?

**HON. A. ANSTETT:** That will depend entirely on our analysis of the impacts of implementation.

**MR. H. GRAHAM:** Mr. Chairman, it's rather difficult to deal with things because we don't know what type of legislation is coming forward and I think it's unfair of us to ask for information . . .

**HON. A. ANSTETT:** On a point of order, Mr. Chairman.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Mr. Minister.

**HON. A. ANSTETT:** I think I've probably helped the member considerably already in deducing what type

of legislation it will be. I've referred to 40 recommendations in the Weir Report, and I've said it's to Part 3 of The Assessment Act.

If the member looks, he will see that Part 3 deals with the revision process, the Court of Revision process, and he will note that there are about 40 recommendations in the Weir Report which deal with that. He can deduce from that, since I have demonstrated repeatedly my high regard for the Weir recommendations. I think he can deduce that the legislation will incorporate most of those 40 recommendations, without my having told him so.

**MR. H. GRAHAM:** Mr. Chairman, I think the best that we can do at the present time is to wish the Minister well with respect to assessment reform. Unfortunately, I think we all know that the Minister will not be in a position to implement it. I think there will be an election before that time. I do know that I will not be seeking re-election, but in all probability, it will become an issue that the incoming government will have to deal with. We just hope that the work the Minister has done at the present time will prove beneficial and I'm sure that most of the work that has gone on will continue to go on when that government does take office.

I have been in this Legislature for some 16 years. I believe the very first speech I made in this Assembly was dealing with the issue of assessment. It was always my hope that assessment reform would have occurred during my time in this Legislature, but it appears now that it will not.

However, I do wish the Filmon Government, which will be in place after the next election, the best of everything. I hope that they will see the fruition of assessment reform in this province.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** 4.(a)—pass; 4.(b) . . .

**HON. A. ANSTETT:** No, Mr. Chairman.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Mr. Minister.

**HON. A. ANSTETT:** Mr. Chairman, I can't let those final comments pass unresponded to and the member knows that, even if it means an invitation for him to jump back in again. I expect to be the Minister who sees this through and sees the benefits of it right through the Nineties.

I think that if the people of Manitoba want to see assessment reform, they're going to have to give responsibility to do it to a government that's demonstrated it's willing to tackle unpopular issues and do what what's right. The Member for Virden knows that he's never been part of a government that was prepared to do that and the only government that's demonstrated - sometimes much to its own misfortune - that is prepared to do that has been our government.

So I'm looking forward to implementing assessment reform and I'm looking forward to the re-election of the Pawley Government to ensure that we do just that.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** 4.(b)—pass.

5.(a) Systems Services, Salaries; 5.(b) Other Expenditures - the Member for Virden.

**MR. H. GRAHAM:** Mr. Chairman, there is a rather large increase in the Other Expenditures under this particular

item. I presume most of that is in the computerization program that is occurring with assessment, I would just like to have that confirmed.

**HON. A. ANSTETT:** Mr. Chairman, I can confirm the member's observation. Most of the increase in the Research and Planning budget relates specifically to that. He will note that on Page 211 of the detailed Estimates support material that, under Computer Utilization, there's a very dramatic increase from \$482,000 to \$733,900.00. The member's assumption is correct.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** While the members are looking for the document, I have not read the resolution yet.

Resolution No. 113: Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty, a sum not exceeding \$4,508,800 for Municipal Affairs, Municipal Assessments, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1986—pass.

5.(a)—pass; 5.(b)—pass.

Resolution 114: Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty, a sum not exceeding \$1,164,600 for Municipal Affairs, Systems Services, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1986—pass.

6.(a) Municipal Planning Services, Salaries; 6.(b) Other Expenditures - the Member for Swan River.

**MR. D. GOURLAY:** On Municipal Planning, I wonder if the Minister could bring us up to date on the number of Planning Districts we have in the province and the number of municipalities that are anticipating or looking at planning districts?

**HON. A. ANSTETT:** I would refer the honourable member to the detailed material provided starting on Page 3-33. There are 22 Planning Districts. This material says 21, but you know we're making progress all the time so you can correct that; and in that you will see the status of all the municipalities that are involved in Planning Districts and which stage each individual component of those Planning Districts is at, whether they've finalized their zoning by-law. For example, the Cypress Planning District has zoning by-laws in effect for all participating municipalities and their overall development plan is in effect.

The one item that is missing here, for the benefit of the honourable member, is an indication as to those municipalities which have received subdivision approval authority. There are three of those at the present time: Turtle Mountain, Selkirk and South Cypress.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Member for Swan River.

**MR. D. GOURLAY:** Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the Minister could bring me up-to-date on the R.M. of Swan River Development Plan. Is that finalized now or is it still just in the study stage?

**HON. A. ANSTETT:** Mr. Chairman, that plan is currently before the Municipal Board. I believe the hearings have been held and we're awaiting a decision. Yes, that's correct. Hearings have been held. We're awaiting a decision.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Member for Virden.

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**MR. H. GRAHAM:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Earlier, I believe, the Minister indicated that there's one case before the Municipal Board. One municipal authority is, I believe, wanting out of a Planning District. Could the Minister indicate which one that is?

**HON. A. ANSTETT:** Yes, before I do that, Mr. Chairman, I should introduce the Director of Municipal Planning to members of the Committee. Now that we decided to spend some time on this item - for a minute I thought he wasn't going to get to take a seat: Mr. John Whiting.

The member refers to the Morden, Stanley, Thompson, Winkler Planning District, known to most as MSTW. The R.M. of Stanley has made application to withdraw from the Planning District in accordance with the provisions of the act. That application has been referred to the Municipal Board. The Municipal Board has held a hearing and their decision is pending.

Two municipalities, urban in character, within that Planning District have filed for annexation of the corridor in the R.M. of Stanley which divides them so that they can obtain planning control over that area in the event that the board recommends to the Minister that the Planning District withdrawal for Stanley be approved. The one action is directly concomitant on the other as I see it and I therefore referred the assessment requests immediately to the board so that they could all be heard and considered at the same time.

The assessment hearing by the board is still before the board because of some further legal action. I'm sorry, I used the word "assessment." The annexation hearing is undergoing some further legal manoeuvres.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** 6.(a)—pass; 6.(b)—pass.

Resolution 115: Resolve that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,919,200 for Municipal Affairs, Municipal Planning Services, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1986—pass.

7.(a) Provincial Planning, Salaries; 7.(b) Other Expenditures - Mr. Minister.

**HON. A. ANSTETT:** Before we start this item, I'd like to introduce Mr. David Johns, the Director of this Branch to the Committee.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Member for Swan River.

**MR. D. GOURLAY:** Yes, I wonder if the Minister can indicate whether there are any proposed changes to the Provincial Land Use Policy.

**HON. A. ANSTETT:** No. I might add, Mr. Chairman, the staff in this branch continually review the policies in the context of development plans that are being formulated to see if refinements are required, but so far the policies are standing the test of time. That doesn't mean that six months from now a problem will have developed and further refinement in the policies be required, but that will be something at that time that will be considered within the department and communicated to the Provincial Land Use Committee of Cabinet and then on to Cabinet if such a change is required.

The guidelines seem to be meeting the requirements of the planning system at the present time. They're

refined in development plans by the districts for local application and seem to be quite successful. I think their original development under the Schreyer Government and implementation by the Lyon Government commends itself to all members.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** 7.(a)—pass. The Member for Virden.

**MR. H. GRAHAM:** Mr. Chairman, the PLUC committee, can the Minister indicate if the No. 1 priority is the protection of agricultural land for agricultural use? Is that still the No. 1 priority of government?

**HON. A. ANSTETT:** Yes.

**MR. H. GRAHAM:** Mr. Chairman, is it also the policy of provincial planning to grant almost any number of acres of agricultural land to the Highways Department whenever there's a request for it?

**HON. A. ANSTETT:** No, Mr. Chairman, reapplication is examined on its merits.

**MR. H. GRAHAM:** Mr. Chairman, is the Land Use Committee of Cabinet aware that in many cases farmers have offered freely to give material to the Highways Department if they would replace the topsoil and allow them to farm over that land again? The Highways Department is somewhat reluctant to adopt that policy.

**HON. A. ANSTETT:** Could the member be more specific?

**MR. H. GRAHAM:** Mr. Chairman, it is traditional that when the Highways Department wants to rebuild a road, the first thing they do is go out and purchase additional right-of-way. In some cases, it's 150 feet; in some cases it's 200 feet; in some cases, it's borrow pits. Whatever land they require in their planning for the building of their road, they at no time, have ever attempted to plan so that the farmer could reutilize the land where they require the clay for their road. They do not want the black dirt.

Farmers have repeatedly volunteered to give them the clay that they require for the road, provided they level it off and put the black dirt back and return the land to agricultural production. That does not seem to fit into the policy of the Highways Department; yet we do have a first priority of this government and, I believe, the previous government that agricultural land should be protected for agricultural purposes wherever possible.

So far, we have been unable to persuade the highway planners to adopt that policy. This province is losing hundreds and thousands of acres of prime agricultural land — (Interjection) — Well, the Minister may question that and I have to agree with him because this government does not seem to be building too many highways.

**HON. A. ANSTETT:** I am aware that the Department of Highways makes arrangements with individuals who wish to remove topsoil from their land in anticipation of highway construction taking place, and utilizing that topsoil elsewhere on their holding. I am not aware of

the offer the honourable member refers to some farmers having made to the Department of Highways.

I have asked staff to make a note of that and they will pursue that with the Department of Highways in accordance with our goal of preserving a very valuable resource in the form of our topsoil. But I am not aware of the suggestion the member makes that this has occurred and these offers have been made, but certainly if that is the case, I think it's worth examining the exact details of the problem.

I do know that the removal and sale of topsoil or removal to other places has been accommodated in certain instances. There are usually logistics problems in terms of doing that and timing that with highway construction or with the construction of drainage ditches. I know that request has been made with regard to some major drainage projects as well.

**MR. H. GRAHAM:** Mr. Chairman, the Minister wants examples or specifics. I would refer him to the proposal to purchase land. I believe it is Highway 355, although it might be a crossroad in the municipality of Blanchard, where a farmer there offered the land to the department, if they would strip the topsoil back and then replace it afterwards. But he wanted to be able to retain his acreage and reuse it and the department would not go along with that proposal.

This is the part that I am trying to make a point on. The Highway Department refuses to change their plans. They want the water to get as far away from the road as possible. That is their argument and that is why they want the extra 50 feet of right-of-way.

In doing so, we are taking out of production, in any given mile of highway construction, as much - if it's 100 feet, it's 9 acres, or approximately. So we are losing probably 9, 10 acres every mile of road that is being built if they're taking a 100-foot right-of-way, and that land has gone out of agricultural production forever.

The argument that is being put forward is that the Highways Department be allowed to use the material, but they remain within their right-of-way when they are finished, is still the same right-of-way as they had before, which is 99 feet, which gives them ample room for the road but it allows the farmer to go back and farm, once again, that land where the clay has been removed but the topsoil has been replaced.

If the Minister wants to think about it, there probably is in this province thousands of acres of land that has been unnecessarily taken out of agricultural production, which could, quite easily, be in production. If the Highways Department was instructed because of our planning to retain agricultural land for agricultural use, wherever possible, they could change their design plans for building a road and their requirements for a right-of-way could be considerably restrained.

**HON. A. ANSTETT:** Mr. Chairman, I'm somewhat taken aback. The honourable member said our government isn't building any highways, therefore the problem must only have occurred when the party of which he is a member was in government, and they're the ones who despoiled these hundreds of thousands of acres in the Province of Manitoba, and now he wants me to fix up the mess that his party created when they were in government.

He originally talked about borrow pits and highways wanting clay. Well that's one thing and I would have been prepared to say I'll refer that request to the Minister of Highways and to his department and have my staff get all the details and get back with it. And I'm prepared to do it in that regard.

But now the member is making an argument for a reduced road width . . .

**MR. H. GRAHAM:** Not a road width.

**HON. A. ANSTETT:** Well, reduced road right-of-way width, for purpose of whatever, which has all kinds of impacts in terms of drainage, in terms of road slope - sorry - grade stability in terms of the slope required down into the ditch so that vehicles that enter the ditch, unfortunately, don't necessarily roll with great ease, so that there isn't a great deal of damage.

Those rights-of-way have been established through judicial process as being adequate through the Land Value Appraisal Commission, through Commissions of Inquiry into expropriation, and through official court proceedings, as being required to meet road building standards.

If the member is choosing to use this committee to challenge those standards, I think he should really be in the Department of Highways Estimates and should have challenged it there.

If he is instead asking me to examine the question of whether or not, when to acquire material, the Department of Highways wants to go off the right-of-way into a borrow pit area or a ridge and get material, and then return it to its natural state, I would hope they would do that and I'm prepared to ask my staff to deal with them and urge them to do that.

But if he's asking me to ask the Department of Highways to do a complete reassessment of the road right-of-way requirements for building to the standards that are being used in this province and he's advocating that this government lower its standards for highways, we're not prepared to do that, despite his opinion of how many roads we build which I utterly reject as well.

**MR. H. GRAHAM:** Mr. Chairman, using the same logic as the Minister has used, I can then come to no other conclusion than the Minister of Municipal Affairs doesn't care how much land the Highways Department takes out of agricultural production, as long as they pay the farmer for it. He doesn't care whether there's any land retained for agricultural use in this province or not. In fact he doesn't seem to care what goes on in this province at all. That's using the same logic as the Minister has just finished using.

Mr. Chairman, I had asked the Minister whether the PLUC committee of Cabinet still had, as a top priority, the preservation of agricultural land for agricultural use, wherever possible. I believe that has been a priority of this government and previous governments.

I have heard suggestions made to the Department of Highways and offers have been made to the Department of Highways to maintain agricultural land for agricultural use and still allow the Highway Department to build their road. Those plans have been rejected by the Department of Highways.

I'm asking the Minister, who I believe is on the PLUC committee, if, in their deliberations, they would go to

the Highways Department and see if it's possible to make sure that, when the Highways Department has completed their highway bill, as much of that land as is possible is returned to agricultural use. I think it's a reasonable request. I know I have made that request before to other governments. It was not acted on then; I don't expect it'll be acted on by this Minister either. However, I have put it on the record that I think it is a reasonable suggestion, but sometimes reason doesn't always win out when it comes to dealing with governments.

**HON. A. ANSTETT:** Mr. Chairman, the honourable member is lucky tonight. Now that he has finally clarified what he really wants, he doesn't want us to throw away the adjudication by engineers and by the courts of our road building standards, but rather wishes an examination of the possibility of the return of as much as possible of that land to agriculture within the context of still respecting highway building standards, the public safety; and since he's affirmed his belief here in this committee that this government places agriculture as a No. 1 priority and the protection of agricultural land as the No. 1 priority of the land-use guidelines, I can't do anything more than accept his reasonable suggestion and have staff review that with Highways staff and, if possible, bring forward a recommendation to PLUC. I think that's reasonable. I wish he would have said that in the first instance and we could have done this 15 minutes ago.

**MR. H. GRAHAM:** Fair enough.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** 7.(a)—pass; 7.(b)—pass.

Resolution No. 116: Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty, a sum not exceeding \$360,600 for Municipal Affairs, Provincial Planning, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1986—pass.

8.(a)(1) Expenditures Related to Capital, Capital Grants: Main Street Manitoba; 8.(a)(2) Urban Transit Bus Purchases.

The Member for Swan River.

**MR. D. GOURLAY:** I notice that there's \$3 million estimated in the budget for Main Street Manitoba, but in the supplementary document it lists estimated \$1.5 million. Should not that be \$3 million as well?

**HON. A. ANSTETT:** I'm sorry. Which page is the honourable member on? Maybe he could help me this time.

**MR. D. GOURLAY:** 3-7.

**HON. A. ANSTETT:** Thank you.

**MR. D. GOURLAY:** Or is that the estimated cash flow? There's \$3 million in the book.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Mr. Minister.

**HON. A. ANSTETT:** Yes, Mr. Chairman, I refer the honourable member to another page as well so he can understand the distinction here, 2-15. If you look at the two of them simultaneously you'll see that what we

are talking about is cash flow of \$3 million this year. That's what we're going to be spending on Main Street Manitoba, in terms of forward commitments. We're looking at \$1.5 million in new commitments, in terms of the detail there.

You see, we had to expand the program last year from \$1.5 million to \$4.8 million because of the tremendous success of "Pete's Perfect Program." 4.8 last year, last June, I believe June 17th I announced that in the House and the cash flow this year is reflective of commitments that were made on that spending authority granted by Cabinet last year so there will be a dramatic increase this year, in terms of total cash flow, both from last year's commitments and from new money appropriated this year in these Estimates.

**MR. D. GOURLAY:** Well, the Minister mentions the tremendous success of the program. Really, wouldn't it be better to say that there was such a backlog or delay of activity the previous year, year-and-a-half that the funding didn't carry, wasn't spent until last year?

**HON. A. ANSTETT:** Mr. Chairman, I think the Member for Swan River is fully aware, because he had an interest in a similar program on a business improvement district basis, which I know that he had done some work on because I know that the Main Street Program had some of the same types of components when it was announced, both as a campaign commitment and then as a government policy commitment when we formed government.

I know that we were able to do it and I think that's a tribute to the former Minister of Municipal Affairs, the Member for Ste. Rose; but I think the reason we were able to do it was we involved the local business community, the local municipality, the town, the village, in some cases, the city in a thorough planning process, which not only did the nuts and bolts planning on paper but developed public commitment, local Chambers of Commerce, the council and the general population of the community behind a project, which cost them tax dollars and cost businesses dollars, but developed a commitment and confidence in the revitalization of their community.

Now if the honourable member says there's something wrong with a program which doesn't spend all its money up front, but instead spends it in response to local commitment, participation, in agreements that I go out and sign, that generally have 75, 80, 85, sometimes 95 percent of the local businesses involved, that takes planning, dedication, a lot of consultation and that takes time, but that's the proof of the program. And the fact that so many communities took their time to do that thoroughly is a demonstration of the tremendous success of the program.

I would not want to rush into anything. I've told members how thoroughly and completely we are planning for assessment reform in this province. It can't be rushed into, it's got to be done right. We want to know what the end product's going to be. Local municipal people applied the same kind of thoroughness of planning and consultation, as a criterion, in Main Street planning and they're doing a tremendous job.

This Estimate is a compliment to their commitment. That's why I'm proud of the program.

**MR. D. GOURLAY:** Mr. Chairman, I think the Minister misunderstood what I was trying to say, that the money didn't flow the previous year. I remember a year ago there was something like three-quarters of a million dollars that would have elapsed if it had not been carried forward and that is why there was \$4.8 million spent last year, was it not?

**HON. A. ANSTETT:** I can help the honourable member. If you add three-quarters of a million, which he says was lapsed and didn't flow, to one-and-a-half, you still only get \$2.25 million. Last year's program had a commitment to authorize \$4.8 million in commitments, some of which flowed last year, a good portion of which will flow this year, some of which will flow in '86-'87. The Town of Dauphin agreement, signed in fiscal '84-'85 will flow most of its money in '85-'86 and a good chunk in '86-'87. That's commitment, out of that 4.8, but it will flow through, in effect, three fiscal years probably.

The City of Portage similarly. Some flow last year, a good chunk this year, as they finish up this spring. I can get and go over with members, if they have detailed questions on the cash flow on various projects, and answer those questions. I'm sure staff will have that information here, but the bottom line is that after a lot of work, a lot of communities are doing something that shows confidence in their community, spending money, and we're putting up the bucks to work with them to see the job done and done right.

**MR. D. GOURLAY:** Mr. Chairman, I agree that the program has a lot of merit. However, does the Minister not agree that, in some cases, a lot of good sidewalks have been ripped up and replaced with a different type of sidewalk. It spends a lot of money but it doesn't really accomplish anything new.

**HON. A. ANSTETT:** Mr. Chairman, I refer the honourable member to the Town of Swan River project where some good sidewalk in some spots was torn up, but a lot of decrepit sidewalk was also replaced. Immediately after the project was done, the Royal Bank had trouble with its sewer and all they did was lift out those unistone blocks, go down and fix the sewer line, back fill, compact and it was done within weeks after the sidewalk was installed. That's the merit and that's a vision for the future and for lower maintenance costs in the future that those communities where that kind of new-style pavement is suitable.

In other communities, we replaced under the program old broken concrete sidewalks with new good concrete sidewalks. It depended on what the local community wanted. I would not come here to criticize their decisions and I don't purport to criticize them. I think they were wise decisions.

If that meant that in one area of a particular main street, half a block, or in front of one's store, there was good sidewalk but there were problems with slumping and cracking in other areas, you can't just replace part of it. I think, generally, they've done a good job of planning that.

**MR. D. GOURLAY:** Has the Minister not received a lot of concerns from people regarding the replacing of

some sidewalks in some of the communities that have applied for the Main Street Manitoba Program?

**HON. A. ANSTETT:** I had one citizen at one opening ceremony when we'd already finished the project raise it with me. I've forgotten which town it was and one of the councillors who was standing with me immediately started explaining why council made that decision. It's been raised once with me. I've never had a phone call or a letter to my office suggesting that.

I've discussed it on a couple of occasions with some councillors and I've told them that's your decision. They've talked to me about the merits of going one way or the other. I told them to discuss that with the planners, their town engineers if they had them, or their consulting engineers if they were hiring consultants to determine what the merits were in terms of their local circumstance. There are a lot of different factors that can enter into these things.

I believe that all of the towns have made that decision based on the best information available to them. We certainly don't tell them what to do.

**MR. D. GOURLAY:** The Community of Mafeking, which is within the LGD of Mountain, have had their main street redone. That is, No. 10 Highway goes right through the community. They were looking at the possibility of participating in Main Street Manitoba Program. I don't see their name on the list. I'm wondering if they're one of the 14 additional communities at the project design stage.

**HON. A. ANSTETT:** I don't know specifically about the unincorporated Village District of Mafeking. I can check that out and provide that to the honourable member.

I would suspect that if they have made an enquiry and expressed an interest and are not at the project review stage, that they will be in the discussion and design stage, yes. Being in that stage doesn't determine whether or not they will or will not proceed. They will, in consultation with the department and looking at the project, determine whether they will proceed.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology.

**HON. E. KOSTYRA:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I couldn't help but note the comment from the Member for Swan River when he described this program as one having a lot of merit. I'm pleased to hear that comment and I recall the kind of comments that were made when the former Minister of Municipal Affairs, the present Member for Ste. Rose, introduced this program in the first year of our term and the kind of ridicule that was made of this program and the fact that it was not going to do anything for rural communities.

I'm certainly pleased that at least one member of the opposition has recognized this as a good program. I think that's certainly a recognition of the effort that the former Minister put in. I think that should be noted on the record of this committee.

Unfortunately for the residents of the Ste. Rose constituency and people of the Province of Manitoba,

maybe fortunately for the members opposite, the Member for Ste. Rose has indicated that he is not running again. This may be the last opportunity that we have in this Committee because there may not be another such opportunity to recognize his efforts in putting together a fine program, one that has been recognized by the opposition of having a lot of merit.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** 8.(a)(1) - the Member for Virden.

**MR. H. GRAHAM:** Mr. Chairman, the Minister indicated, I believe, that last year there was authority for 4.8 million in the Main Street Program and, yet, according to the Estimates there was only 1.5 million authorized. Could the Minister indicate was the other by way of Special Warrant or how does that Capital Authority, how is it approved and when does it lapse? I notice the Minister of Finance is here. Perhaps he could . . .

**HON. A. ANSTETT:** There was no Special Warrant and it wasn't in the Estimates. It was a commitment authority provided to the Department of Municipal Affairs to forward, commit funds so that we could sign agreements and go on with projects from a large number of municipalities that wanted to do projects. That's why you see \$3 million in this year and you will see some of those commitments that were made last summer and fall in the '86-87 Estimates, but with an authority of only 1.5 million each year, I would have had to start rationing the money because there were so many people in the line. We didn't want to see a successful program such as this that was so important to rural Manitoba constrained by lack of funds.

I want to point out for the benefit of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology that compliments similar to those of the Member for Swan River have been provided on sight at Main Street ribbon cuttings by other members of the opposition; the Member for Pembina in both Carman and Morden; the Member for Emerson at the signing ceremony in Niverville; the Member for Lakeside at the ribbon cutting in Stonewall. I could go on. I believe that all members of the House recognize the merits of this program.

In fact, if I could remember the wonderful things the Member for Lakeside said - he spoke for four or five minutes in Stonewall - I'd put them all on the record, but the Stonewall newspaper recorded them quite well and the members can consult that. It was September 25th last fall, 1984, if they wish to check his actual comments.

I think there is a recognition on both sides of the House that the former Minister of Municipal Affairs put together a tremendous program that has been well received right across the province.

**MR. H. GRAHAM:** Mr. Chairman, I note in the supplementary information we received, that last year the actual was \$1,138,156.00. There was \$1,500,000 in the Estimates. Does the unexpended portion lapse at the end of the fiscal year?

**HON. A. ANSTETT:** Yes, that money lapses. That's why the requirement for the authority to forward commit.

**MR. H. GRAHAM:** That was all I wanted.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Member for Ste. Rose.

**MR. A. ADAM:** Mr. Chairman, I just want to put on the record my thanks to the Member for Swan River for acknowledging that the Main Street Manitoba Program was a good program. As well, I would thank my colleague, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology, for his comments and yours, Mr. Minister, as well.

I want to say that a lot of the credit is due to the co-operation that I received from the Municipal Advisory Committee when I was putting the program together; also the assistance that I received from staff in Municipal Affairs; and of course, the co-operation that I received from different towns and communities that were interested in this program.

It certainly was a program that was worthwhile. I think it will be long lasting. It will be visible for many many years. I know that a lot of communities are much better for the Manitoba Main Street Program.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** 8.(a)—pass; 8.(b)—pass.

**HON. A. ANSTETT:** There is no 8.(b).

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** 8.(a)(1)—pass; 8.(a)(2)—pass.  
The Member for Niakwa.

**MR. A. KOVNATS:** What is the Urban Transit Bus Purchases? Is that the interest on the purchases? What is it, two buses?

**HON. A. ANSTETT:** That's for the City of Brandon. Brandon is the only municipally-owned transit authority outside the City of Winnipeg. Thompson and Flin Flon, the other two, are private contracts. We provide grants for the purchase of municipal buses in the City of Brandon, similar to the Department of Urban Affairs arrangement through the block grant system for the City of Winnipeg.

**MR. A. KOVNATS:** Is it two buses, is that the number?

**HON. A. ANSTETT:** I don't know what the price of a Flyer bus is today.

**MR. A. KOVNATS:** I would think that it will be a keepsake before too long.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Resolution 117: Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty, a sum not exceeding \$3,150,000 for Municipal Affairs, Expenditures Related to Capital, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1986—pass.

Back to Item No. 1.(a) Minister's Salary - the Member for Virden.

**MR. H. GRAHAM:** Mr. Chairman, this is the place where we wrap up the Department Estimates. I want to say at this time that I want to thank the Minister for the information he has provided. I want to thank the staff for the co-operation that has been quite evident at this committee.

But in winding it up, I think I would be remiss if I didn't bring to the attention of all the tremendous work



that was done in assessment review by the Honourable Walter Weir, whose untimely death was quite recently noted in the Assembly. I think all Manitobans owe a great debt to Mr. Weir for the work that he has done in the Weir Commission Report. I think this is the proper time for us to pay tribute to him for that work and to thank him, posthumously, for it.

So with those few remarks, I would move that this item be passed.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Mr. Minister.

**HON. A. ANSTETT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I do appreciate the remarks of the Member for Virden as the Municipal Affairs Critic. I particularly appreciate his reference to the availability of information. We've done our best in terms of the supplementary information in the additional handouts to give members as much material as they needed to address the Estimates and provide information. I think the credit for that goes to staff who have done a lot of background work and material.

But I think perhaps, more important, I do join with him in his tribute to the late Honourable Walter Weir, who I think will leave behind a legacy in the MARC Report, which will serve us well for decades. I think it's going to take probably as long to implement as it took him to write it, but I'm not at all hesitant to say that the final product will be well worth the wait, just as the wait for his report which was received by my predecessor, was certainly well worth the wait.

I think the opportunities we have over the next several years to address this problem are going to be challenging opportunities, but they're going to be opportunities in which the satisfaction is going to be - as it is for the Member for Virden even now, seeing something that he has shown an interest in and worked on for 16 years now. Although he hasn't had an opportunity to deal directly with the issues, he has pursued them, somewhat doggedly, and I know he chatted with me at the time of the Weir Condolence Motion in the House, that this was something that he and the former Premier had discussed when he first considered running.

If I can share with the committee a thought that the Member for Virden gave me then, it was that Mr. Weir had said to him, "If you've interested in assessment reform, you better know it's a very tough issue and other people have tackled it and it's going to take a long time."

I guess the Member for Virden saw those words coming back to our late colleague when he was appointed to the Assessment Review Committee. So I think perhaps things sometimes don't change as much as they remain the same. The Member for Virden is still getting the same message. It's a tough problem and we're working on it.

**MR. H. GRAHAM:** You're kidding.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Minister of Natural Resources.

**HON. S. USKIW:** Mr. Chairman, I think the Minister has covered the point. I just wanted to associate this side with the remarks of the Member for Virden,

because I think it shouldn't be left on the record as a partisan feeling, but rather that it is a feeling of all of us. The Minister has covered the subject well.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** 1.(a) Minister's Salary—pass.

Resolution 110: Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,077,300 for Municipal Affairs, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1986—pass.

**MR. H. GRAHAM:** Committee rise.

**HON. A. ANSTETT:** Committee rise.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Committee rise.

## SUPPLY - HEALTH

**MR. CHAIRMAN, P. EYLER:** The committee will come to order. We are considering the Estimates of the Department of Health.

The Honourable Minister of Co-operative Affairs.

**HON. J. COWAN:** I suggest the following, Mr. Chairperson, with the understanding that the section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 255 continue to do so. I suggest that this section of the committee rise now and that the Speaker be called in and the House adjourned on the understanding as outlined that the other committee will continue meet.

On that basis, Mr. Chairperson, I move that committee rise.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Committee rise.

The Opposition House Leader on a point of order.

**MR. H. ENNS:** Mr. Chairman, I know that, just coming in the hallway, the arrangements that the Honourable Minister indicated to the House was just read to me, but there is the difficulty of not being able to respond to a situation that may arise in the other committee. I have no prediction of what will or will not happen and I'm certainly prepared, as I know my colleagues are prepared, to acknowledge that this section of the committee is prepared to adjourn. I just raised that matter.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Member for Pembina.

**MR. D. ORCHARD:** Mr. Chairman, would it not work out to let the other committee sit with the Mace here, and when they adjourn their committee, they come in here and close the House. That way, if there is any need for a vote, if we've adjourned the House and there is any call for a vote under whatever circumstances in the next committee, they are essentially finished for the night then. If the House is adjourned, they cannot come in here and undertake a formal vote.

So if you left the Mace exactly where it is and this committee is understood it's not going to be sitting tonight, the Committee of Municipal Affairs can come in here when they adjourn their committee and close down the House.

**Tuesday, 30 April, 1985**

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**MR. CHAIRMAN:** I am advised by the Clerk that it would be quite all right to have votes in the other committee, that they wouldn't have to come in here to vote. Both sections can be called into that room, apparently it has been done in the past.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Opposition House Leader.

**MR. H. ENNS:** Except, Mr. Chairman, the difference being that calling in the Speaker and officially adjourning the House, we are, in my judgment, setting a precedent that may not serve us well. I believe, despite what may be the opinion, with respect, of the Speaker from time to time about his job, but there is absolutely nothing wrong with having the Speaker contemplate the universe as it unfolds while committee keeps on meeting

and having him come in here and adjourn the House at 10 o'clock.

**HON. V. SCHROEDER:** Maybe we could ask him some questions.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Order please. Do I sense that the consensus is that we rise now and adjourn the House at 10 o'clock?

Order please, order please. After 10 o'clock there could be no adverse votes in the other committee anyway, so perhaps 10 o'clock would be an appropriate time to adjourn the House.

The Deputy Speaker will be here to adjourn the House at 10 p.m.

On that understanding, committee rise.