

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Wednesday, October 28, 1981

Chairman: Mr. Mandeville

10:20 a.m.

MR CHAIRMAN: Good morning. I think we can bring our meeting to order. Sorry for the delay. It was private members' Bills and then we had to wait for *Hansard* to make their change-over. We're not going to have much time this morning; the minister has to leave at 11 o'clock, and we've agreed to give up some of our time today to the heritage trust fund committee meeting.

We don't have the minutes before us, committee members. Shelley has been so busy with other meetings that her minutes aren't complete, but she guarantees she'll have both sets ready for our next meeting. We do have our transcript.

I think we'll get on with the purpose of our meeting. We have the Minister of Municipal Affairs here. On behalf of the committee, Mr. Minister, thank you for coming. Possibly we could have you open with a few comments on Municipal Affairs and then go back to committee members for questions.

MR MOORE: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. First of all I apologize for only being available until 11 o'clock. I was trying late last week to respond to the committee's request to have some minister available today, but I will say to the committee that I've made sure to be available on the following Wednesday for the full time, if that's so desired.

I want to explain as well, Mr. Chairman, that I did not bring any officials with me this morning for a variety of reasons, the first one being that one or two of them are tied up in meetings that I didn't feel I should draw them from unless I knew there was a necessity. The second reason is that the deputy minister was new in October 1980, after these public accounts we're dealing with were completed. Two assistant deputy ministers have been new since that time, and I think the financial director of my department came on stream about nine days ago. With a little advance warning, all those people would be quite prepared to deal with matters relating to the '79-80 public accounts.

Perhaps I could make just a few brief comments. First of all, I would be prepared to explain expenditures or program content of any of the various programs you see before you, and to explain, if that is required, any questions there might be with respect to the financial statements of the department.

I believe there is one note in the Auditor General's department, Mr. Chairman, that relates to Municipal Affairs, and it deals largely with the manner in which we handle fixed assets within the improvement districts trust account. The same might be said for the assets of the special areas. I think that since that report was issued we have made some considerable progress in ensuring that we do have better control of the assets in the improvement districts, and a better record of where they're at. I should say that in that area in particular we did have some weakness in terms of financial reporting to my department, and we've taken steps to correct that. Indeed, I guess it's public knowledge that we asked for the resignation of the financial director of the Department of Municipal Affairs about a year ago. That was secured, and the position was vacant for a time. But we now have what we feel is a

top-notch individual in that position. I should explain there that there was never any question of misuse of funds or wrongdoing, but simply not the adequate kind of job I felt was necessary in terms of financial accounting.

Members will see that there is some extraordinary growth in some programs, mainly the shielding of the municipal debt over which, once the policy is established for the year, the department has little or no control, because our exposure is altered by way of the interest rates that are charged to the Municipal Financing Corporation from funds borrowed, I guess exclusively until this time, from the Heritage Savings Trust Fund -- at least over the last three or four years. That interest rate is something in excess of 18 per cent right now, and our budget varies, based on that interest rate. I should explain, Mr. Chairman, that it varies in the following financial year. In other words, commitments that we make, say, in October 1981 with respect to municipal financing, really don't affect the budget in the current year we're in, because the first subsidies are paid when the first instalment is due, if you like, which, in most cases, is a year from now.

With those few brief comments, Mr. Chairman, I'd be pleased to try to answer any questions with regard to the financial statements or content of the various programs that exist in Municipal Affairs.

MR CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Do we have any questions with regard to last year's public accounts? . . . It looks like things are running pretty smoothly in your department, Marv.

Mr. Gogo.

MR GOGO: Mr. Chairman, I don't know what questions are going to flow from the committee. Inasmuch as he's made comments regarding the access to the municipal finance council for municipalities to access funds for capital projects, I want to ask the Minister of Municipal Affairs if he would mind commenting to the committee on the increase or decrease of municipalities requesting those funds for capital projects in the context of constructing buildings whose future operating costs appear to be very high.

I say that from the point of view that the general perception I get is that because it's so-called cheap money at 11 per cent, increased from 8 per cent to 9 per cent, is the minister at all concerned about the increase of requests for funds?

MR MOORE: Mr. Chairman, the hon. member is perhaps moving into a discussion that would be current in terms of my concerns or any statements I might make. With respect to the fiscal year 1979-80, my comment would have to be that we were not at all concerned about borrowings of municipalities in that fiscal year because we had only then announced and put in place a \$1 million debt reduction program. So in fact, the situation was quite the reverse to what it is today, in that there were not any increases in borrowings that were in any way more than what one would expect in that particular public accounts year. As I've explained at other times throughout the course of the past few months, the situation is different now.

MR CHAIRMAN: A supplementary, Mr. Gogo.

MR GOGO: A supplementary. What I was obviously trying to do, Mr. Chairman, was to open the discussion this morning. I recognize -- and I always seem to have difficulty relating to the fact -- that we're dealing with 1979 public accounts in 1981.

Perhaps a question to the minister regarding the planning commissions in Alberta which come under his jurisdiction would be in order. I understand the city of Lethbridge, the constituency I represent, now has authority to operate its own planning department and, in effect, can be divorced from the Oldman River Regional Planning Commission. The question has come up in the past about the assessment on the city of Lethbridge in terms of dues to the Oldman River Regional Planning Commission when, in effect, they have their own planning department.

Has consideration been given to: (a) allowing them not to pay those dues or, (b) a reduced amount of assessment into the Oldman River Regional Planning Commission?

MR MOORE: Mr. Chairman, the system of regional planning commissions throughout the province is based on municipalities paying a fixed fee schedule, if you like, to the Alberta Planning Board planning fund and that varies, depending on the size of the municipality. Those funds are then multiplied by way of grants which appear in the public accounts from the Department of Municipal Affairs to regional planning commissions. I don't have it with me, Mr. Chairman, but I'd be prepared to provide the formula under which money is obtained from member municipalities to go into the Alberta Planning Fund, and the percentage that is equal to in comparison to what is provided by the department.

I can say that there had been a trend in recent years toward the Department of Municipal Affairs, through our grants to regional planning commissions, paying a larger percentage of regional planning costs. I guess that had moved during this fiscal year, to about the area of 80 per cent of funds being provided by the department, and 20 per cent by the municipalities involved. I wanted to alter that -- and did -- for a couple of reasons, so that it had a formula basis that wouldn't escalate the percentage the Department of Municipal Affairs was paying. First of all, it's important that municipalities are, if you like, responsible for the staffs of regional planning commissions and the kinds of things they do. For that reason, I wanted to make sure that there was some fair commitment by municipalities to ensure that was the case.

Mr. Chairman, I believe I erred when I said 80:20. At one time we had established a 75 per cent municipal government contribution and a 25 per cent contribution from the department. That had slipped the other way to about 70:30, and we're trying to bring it back. I'll provide separately a schedule of the current fees that are collected from municipal governments to go into planning commissions, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to explain that background because the planning commission in a region can't function if people are opting in or opting out, and can't function on the basis that somebody may begin to be their own subdivision approving authority, and be able to opt out of paying to the Alberta Planning Fund and supporting that planning commission.

So I think it's fair to say we've established a procedure that if a municipality like Lethbridge wants to get approval to be their own subdivision approving authority -- and that's really all we're thinking about; the regional planning commission still has a mandate over Lethbridge with respect to the development and maintenance of a regional plan and any alterations that may occur to it -- we have allowed that Edmonton, Calgary, Lethbridge, Spruce Grove, and more recently the county of Parkland, can establish their own subdivision approving authorities which is allowed under the Act. In so doing they are relieved of some responsibilities towards supporting the regional

planning commission but not to the extent that it would cover their costs of setting up their own subdivision approving authority. If you like, there is built into our system a -- perhaps one shouldn't call it a penalty, but at least encouragement to opt out of the regional planning commission in terms of being your own subdivision approving authority is not built into the system.

In short, I guess the system allows that Lethbridge probably pays more to that regional planning commission than they might otherwise do, because they've opted to have their own subdivision approving authority. I don't think that's bad, because it's in the interests of that city, being the largest community in the region that the region around them be properly planned in terms of subdivision approvals and so on. I think they recognize that. I've had a few complaints from municipalities in this regard, but I don't regard them as an alarming problem when you consider the total budget in the municipality, or the amount they might contribute to the planning fund if we made some adjustments.

MR CHAIRMAN: Mr. Stromberg.

MR STROMBERG: I realize that questions asked in the '79-80 budget tend to flow into this year's program, but the municipal finance board -- do they have a set amount that a village, county, municipality, or city can go into debt per capita, or is it flexible?

MR MOORE: Mr. Chairman, I'm not exactly sure what the hon. member is referring to. First of all, there is no municipal finance board; there is a Municipal Financing Corporation, and the responsibility of that in terms of ministerial responsibility rests with the Provincial Treasurer. There is then a Local Authorities Board which is a local authority which approves debenture by-laws by municipalities and that Local Authorities Board is the responsibility of the Minister of Municipal Affairs. I would believe that the hon. member would be referring to whether or not the Local Authorities Board does have the authority or the power or the mandate to place some restrictions on municipal spending. Is that the case?

MR STROMBERG: Yes.

MR MOORE: If that is the case, Mr. Chairman, then the answer is that we removed limits on municipal borrowing in about 1974, as I recall. Since that time, there have been no legislative defined limits on per capita borrowings with municipalities, but I'm advised by the chairman of the Local Authorities Board that in his opinion, his board does have a mandate under its legislation to say to a municipality: we believe that you are in a position, or your repayment ability is a problem, and that these borrowings you are now requesting by way of this by-law should be reconsidered. For reasons of that nature, in recent times the Local Authorities Board has returned a by-law to a municipality and asked them if they might reconsider it in some way or another. This most often happens with smaller municipalities who may be into some very expensive street paving programs, or something of that nature.

I'm not aware that -- in fact, I don't believe there has been a case in recent years where the Local Authorities Board has refused outright to approve a by-law based on the repayment ability not being there. I would say, however, Mr. Chairman, that that's a matter that we'd have to consider from time to time, not that the province has any particular magic through the Local Authorities Board in terms of a watchdog. It is important, nevertheless, that

some authority be there to say to municipalities, at least you'd better have a second look at this and at least you'd better show us how you intend to repay over the period of time, because as hon. members would recognize, just the fact that someone is doing that, I think, allows that a council and its administration would take a little more care in the event that they aren't taking care, and that sometimes does happen in 350 municipalities across the province before approving a borrowing debenture.

MR CHAIRMAN: Mrs. Cripps, do you have a supplementary question to Mr. Gogo's first question?

MRS CRIPPS: Yes, but go ahead and finish Gordon's.

MR CHAIRMAN: I think Mr. Stromberg is finished.

MRS CRIPPS: My question was with regard to subdivision authority. Is there anything in the plan that covers costs to adjoining authorities of subdivision approval given by a subdivision approving authority? Supposing, for example, the approvals of the subdivision authority of the county of Parkland cost the municipalities within that county extra funding because of incidental happenings, is there anything in there that covers that?

MR MOORE: I'm having a bit of difficulty, Mr. Chairman, in understanding exactly what the hon. member is referring to. The county of Parkland is its own subdivision approving authority. Municipalities within that county, Stony Plain for example, still receive a subdivision approving authority presently from the Edmonton Regional Planning Commission. I'm not aware of any costs in the town of Stony Plain associated with subdivision approval in Parkland, unless the member is referring to such things as infrastructure costs in an urban municipality that's located within a rural municipality in the event that rural municipality subdivides property for industrial parks or whatever. There are provisions in The Municipal Government Act for municipalities to share an industrial tax base if two municipalities agree. I guess the only comment there would be that I'm not aware of any agreements in place because there aren't too many that want to give away tax revenue. There are agreements in place with regard to paying for recreational services and so on on some basis other than tax revenue, but I can't answer beyond that, Mr. Chairman, unless the member has a further explanation of the concern.

MRS CRIPPS: If the municipality involved within the subdivision authority feels that they are going to have additional expenses, can they object? If they do object, what weight does their objection carry, once you have this subdivision approving authority?

MR MOORE: There are provisions within The Planning Act for adjoining property owners to object to subdivision or an application for subdivision approval. The members of a regional planning commission, of course, sit on the authority that approves subdivisions and if, for example, a subdivision were being approved by, we'll say, the new Yellowhead Regional Planning Commission in a rural area around the town of Drayton Valley, the town would have representations on the planning commission. I wouldn't know whether they had them on the subdivision approving authority or not. Through that process they would have a right to object. But individually, unless the subdivision was adjoining the town or they could show that in some way it had a dramatic

effect on the town, they would not have an individual right to object except there are again provisions in The Planning Act for a municipality which has a dispute with a planning commission to refer the matter to the Alberta Planning Board for some resolution. That most often is a dispute with regard to the interpretation of a regional plan or part of a regional plan that might have allowed that a subdivision be approved. The only thing that I could say, Mr. Chairman, is that we almost have to deal with specifics when we get into questions about whether or not a certain person or entity has a right to be heard with respect to the approval of a subdivision, because there are a hundred different sorts of instances that do occur.

MR CHAIRMAN: Dr. Carter.

DR CARTER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To the minister. I know that in the period we're looking at now, the municipal debt reduction plan had a great effect on the municipalities, and in particular the cities of Calgary and Edmonton. I'm also aware that in the two and a half years I've been here, how much the government does want to have the municipalities carry on their own autonomy. The first part, the massive infusion of dollars to municipalities, doesn't concern me, but the thing that concerns me is that sometimes the municipalities believe that we really haven't given them anything -- or next to nothing. In terms of some of the programs that go on in Calgary -- granted, with respect to the Transportation Department rather than your own department, nevertheless through your office of Municipal Affairs -- you have to have knowledge of the amount of dollars going into a municipality such as Calgary. One of the things that concerns me is that there's very little credit given to the provincial government. It seems to me we're not too often aware of too many thank-yous, and I'm wondering if you've ever given consideration to the thought that we might have to find some other additional funds so that some of the more significant projects are at least shown to be in partnership between the municipality and the province by way of signage.

MR R CLARK: The city of Calgary and Alberta.

MR MOORE: Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure that I can be of much help there. The grants from the Department of Municipal Affairs are largely unconditional. Members will see in the public accounts that we're discussing \$68.5 million in unconditional grants. It's sort of hard to sign that. We'll also see \$8.5 million in interest rebates, which has grown to far in excess of that now.

Probably some of the major support that occurs from this department to municipalities has to do with The Property Tax Reduction Act, 1980, and the support there to property owners, particularly senior citizens, and to renters. All those are sort of people programs that are areas the province was never involved in a number of years ago. We simply let the taxation on property pay for those services and didn't provide any relief.

I guess, Mr. Chairman, to put it in a nutshell, while the municipalities in some particular cases want all of these funds to be provided on an unconditional basis, I in this department feel pretty strongly that programs like the municipal renter assistance program and the property tax reduction program should continue because they're provincial funds to provide relief to a particular segment of our population, and we have a responsibility in that area as well as the municipal government. So it's really a partnership, and I don't have any qualms about our partnership arrangement with municipalities under the programs in Municipal Affairs at all, with the exception of one

program, and that's the interest rebate program. My concern there isn't the dollars that are being provided from our budget, but rather it's whether or not there are different decisions made than might otherwise be made because that interest rate is so significantly lower than the going rate. I think municipalities are concerned about that as well when they get pressured by others to do things they might not normally do simply because they have the availability of lower interest money. By our program, I think you're then creating an economic situation, if you like, that may not be real. I refer there to whether or not a municipality is involved in all the front-end costs in a residential development. If the developer can borrow funds at the same rate as a municipality does, the trend had been towards developers providing all these funds and doing the infrastructure. Now in many communities, the trend seems to be the other way, and it's for a very good reason.

MR CHAIRMAN: A supplementary, Dr. Carter.

DR CARTER: Just a supplementary comment. I'm not for one moment by my comments wanting to withdraw funds from the municipalities.

Thank you.

MR CHAIRMAN: Mr. Anderson.

MR D ANDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The minister obviously has been considering over the budget year that we're discussing, as well as since, the possible alternative funding mechanisms for municipalities mainly in the form of a gasoline tax. Since that's been rejected by the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, is the minister now considering any other possible facilitating ways of allowing the municipalities to self-finance other than the property tax?

MR MOORE: Mr. Chairman, the answer is no. I'm not considering that, but I do have in a place a committee that's comprised of two members named by the Urban Municipalities Association, two by the Association of MDs and Counties, and two resource people, one from my department and one from Treasury, who have under way a review of the provincial/municipal fiscal arrangements that we presently have. They had provided to me an interim report that dealt with the municipal gasoline tax. They have not provided any further reports, but they are continuing their work. I expect during the course of the next year, or probably toward the end of next year, to be provided with a final report or perhaps more interim reports if the committee deems that desirable. So that work is being carried on there but I'm not directly involved in it until such time as the committee has something to report.

MR CHAIRMAN: Mr. Magee.

MR MAGEE: Mr. Chairman, through you to the minister. For a number of years there were established guidelines for the types of businesses that could be established in industrial subdivisions surrounding cities built by municipalities. Back through the years there seems to have been some confrontation, but it seems to be growing and a proliferation of arguments as to what type of businesses should be allowed in these industrial subdivisions, and the population that it might generate in the way of those types of people employed in offices and, we'll say, trailer parks and things of this nature that truly encroach upon the major municipality which supplies many different

types of services. So I'd like to ask the minister if there has been a tightening up of the type of businesses allowed in these industrial subdivisions and whether this is an ongoing situation or what can we look for in the future, because it has been a problem.

MR MOORE: Mr. Chairman, the question the hon. member poses is an important one and one that causes a lot of concern throughout the province. The situation is this. The Planning Act, 1977, does not direct what kind of subdivisions might be approved in a rural area surrounding a community, but it does direct that each regional planning commission can develop a regional plan by the end of 1982, which must be approved by the municipal planning board and the Minister of Municipal Affairs. During the course of the last three years there has been an increasing debate in most planning commission areas about what policy should be followed with respect to the creation of industrial subdivisions or the location of industrial works, if you like, in rural municipalities surrounding urban ones. The most vocal discussion has been occurring in the Calgary Regional Planning Commission, and involves the city of Calgary, of course, and its surrounding municipalities as well as urban municipalities surrounding it. It seemed last spring that one of the major problems that regional planning commissions were having with coming to grips to the approval of a regional plan, was this particular question. It arises partly from the fact that every municipality wants a lucrative assessment and we're talking about industrial plants and other works that are generally a plus on the assessment side for a municipality.

We see -- by "we", the Alberta Planning Board -- in my office a problem developing that wasn't seeming to get solved in accordance with the authority we have under the Act to do so. The Alberta Planning Board developed for me, and I approved, a rural industrial subdivision policy that we felt would be workable across the province, and that was made public and provided to every regional planning commission in Alberta with the view that it was guidelines only from the Alberta Planning Board and from my office relative to how they dealt with this problem. My information is that this has helped considerably. It obviously hasn't cured the problems in total. I can provide a copy of that, Mr. Chairman. If any member wants it, he can just contact my office. That hasn't solved all the problems, but it goes in the right direction. Basically what it does is it says there are certain kinds of industry, because of the the problems associated with those industries if they were to be built close to residential communities, and we can all go back in time and see the mistakes we made. The problems associated with a major fertilizer plant in an urban community are not ones we can easily undo once they're there, but they're easier to undo ahead of time. So our policy would reckon that fertilizer plants, for example, under almost no circumstances should be built in an urban community, and that that is a good thing to be in a rural industrial subdivision, quite far removed from any residential area.

We have looked as well at the kinds of industries that use very large tracts of land but require very little servicing, and the hon. member, Mr. Chairman, was at one time in the farm machinery business. At one time there was one on every block in every little town, and you only had the corner lot that was 200 feet wide. But as time goes on and that business becomes more sophisticated and there are fewer dealers and it gets larger, some of them now are with 50, 60 acres of land. We believe that it's unreasonable perhaps to insist that that kind of business be located only in an urban community when you look at the prices of land. If you're going around Edmonton and you're looking for a place to put a farm machinery agency and you need that kind of land, at

\$50,000 an acre you may never get into business. So that policy has said that there are a number of those kinds of things that use large acreages of land with very little municipal services, that are polluting by nature when it comes to the proximity to residential people, and a number of other reasons, could be located in rural areas. We haven't dictated that; the regional plan, in our view, should be designed to allow that to occur. Once you approve a regional plan in that way, it still requires the approval of the members of the regional planning commission to create a subdivision. All we've said is that the general policy direction should be that those types of industries could be located and should be located when possible in rural areas.

MR CHAIRMAN: A further supplementary, Mr. Magee.

MR MAGEE: Mr. Chairman, I agree wholeheartedly with the guidelines that have been established, and so on, but my question is: does the minister consider they've gone far enough, Mr. Chairman, in giving direction of what shall not be developed in an industrial subdivision? Because it seems to me that just as I said at the outset, there's a proliferation of municipalities trying to build their tax bases through having more people operate in smaller types of acreage areas, and this seems to me to be something that's coming forward now.

MR MOORE: Mr. Chairman, the policy that I referred to is guidelines for development of regional plans. We prefer that the regional planning commissions themselves make the final decisions, so I can't respond to the department or the Alberta Planning Board having a firm decision or direction on the growth of industrial subdivisions in rural areas. But if I can again, in a different way perhaps, state the objective that we would like to see, following the guidelines that we've issued. It's quite appropriate that the livestock auction marts should be located out of the urban area, because if it isn't, you're inviting problems in due course. You can put in on the east side of town, but they'll build residences on the east side of town, east of the auction mart, if you wait long enough. So we put it out of town. But then the next request that's received by the municipality is for a shopping centre around the auction mart because they need the bank, and some other things and some other things. That, in fact, under the policy guidelines we have put forward, would be where you would draw the line. You would then say, no; this business is here by itself and it isn't going to have with it the bank and the western wear store and the other things that somebody might want to put there. Those are our policy guidelines and the municipalities themselves, through their regional planning commissions, have to develop those criteria a lot finer than I've explained it here, but I hope that sort of explains the general guidelines than we'd like to see them follow.

MR CHAIRMAN: Mr. Wolstenholme.

MR WOLSTENHOLME: My question has to do with mobile-home owners. The information I've been given recently is that those who live in a mobile-home park don't share in the home-owners' grants. I always understood that every citizen in Alberta shared in it. Is my information incorrect?

MR MOORE: Mr. Chairman, we've had a great difficulty under the property tax reduction program in determining how to deal with mobile-home owners. Perhaps I should just back up, and for members who are not acquainted with it say this: a mobile-home owner does not have an assessment placed on his property

the same as other individuals who live in single-family homes. But he does have placed on his property -- not the land, because presumably he's renting that and we're dealing here with mobile homes on rented pads. Mobile homes on single lots that are owned by the mobile-home owner are a different situation. A licence fee is charged to the mobile-home owner. It's based on the assessed value of his mobile home without the land. The reason for the licence fee, which may not be as valid today as it was at one time, is that if the mobile home is moved from one municipality to another throughout the year, we can divide the licence fee. That licence fee, which is equal to, in a broad sense, the assessment that might occur if we assessed that mobile home on the same basis we assess a two- or three-bedroom single-family home, is subject to a rebate under the property tax reduction program, the same as if you owned your own home. That licence fee is subject to a rebate under the property tax reduction programs as if you owned your own home. In other words, if you're a senior citizen you get that benefit as a reduction from your licence fee, the same as you would if you owned a single-family residence. In recent years, however, the licence fee has become a smaller and smaller percentage of the total of the licence fee plus the rent on the pad, and the rents are escalating in some areas beyond what a lot of people consider to be economically reasonable. I've seen figures as high as \$380 a month for just the rent on the pad.

We treat people in two ways. They can take the property tax reduction program from their licence, or they can be provided with a renter assistance grant, which at the moment runs up to \$400 per year, I believe. Dealing with senior citizens, we're currently reviewing that with a view to some possible changes for the next calendar year. I guess the debate would be whether or not one should increase that to the \$500 received by senior citizens who live in subsidized rented accommodation, other than mobile homes, or whether it should be increased to some other fee like \$1,000 which is provided to senior citizens who live in non-subsidized accommodation. I don't know. The one difficult problem is that trailer pad rents vary so much across the province. I think we can come to resolution of it, however, and we currently have it under consideration.

MR WOLSTENHOLME: Mr. Chairman, he covered it so well that he took all my supplementaries.

MR CHAIRMAN: I see our time has elapsed. The minister has to leave at 11 o'clock, and we've agreed to give up our time from 11 to noon to the heritage trust fund. The Chair's not able to read how many more prospective questions we're going to get. We do have four more names on the list here where questions haven't been answered, so I would think that we should have the minister appear at next Wednesday's meeting.

HON MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR CHAIRMAN: I want to thank you very much, Mr. Minister, for coming today. Out of the four we were trying to get to our meeting, he was the only minister we could get. However, the Provincial Treasurer did indicate that he would be available for next Wednesday. By the number of topics we've covered under the minister today and four I have listed here, I think possibly we'd better have the Provincial Treasurer on stand-by for our next meeting. I'll have Shelley get hold of the Provincial Treasurer and have him on stand-by for when we finish with the Department of Municipal Affairs.

I'll accept a motion to adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 11:02 a.m.