

# **The Future City: A Selection of Views on the Reorganization of Government in Greater Winnipeg**

**Future City Series No. 1**

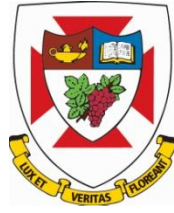
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**Edited by Dr. Lloyd Axworthy  
1971**

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**The Institute of Urban Studies**





THE UNIVERSITY OF  
WINNIPEG

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**THE FUTURE CITY: A SELECTION OF VIEWS ON THE REORGANIZATION OF GOVERNMENT IN  
GREATER WINNIPEG**

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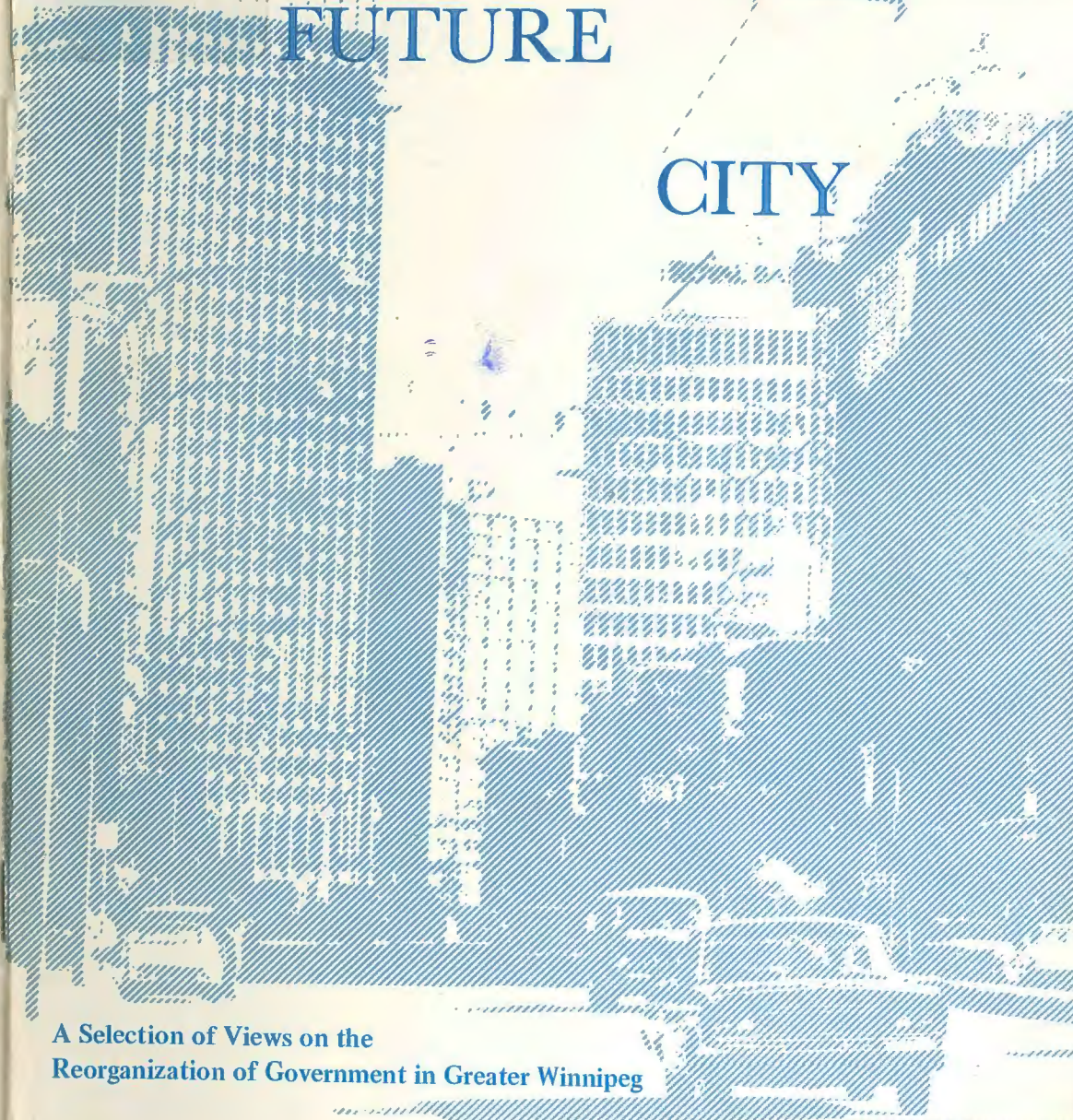
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**Contributors**

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Professor Jim McNiven  
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Mr. James Cassidy

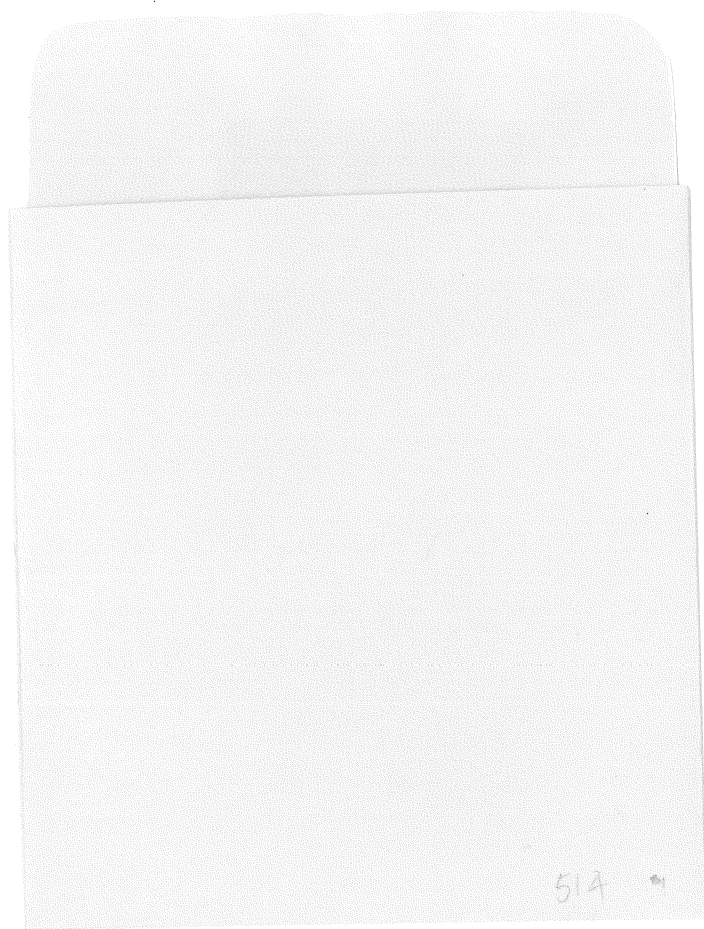
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## INTRODUCTION – DECISIONS ON A FUTURE CITY

– by Lloyd Axworthy

In a very short time Greater Winnipeg will have a new form of government. The provincial cabinet has issued its policy Paper on Local Government Reform and has promised to introduce legislation at the forthcoming session. By the new year of 1972, this new structure of government will be operational.

For many citizens of the city this is a welcome occurrence. It has become clear over the past several years that the existing system of local government was not working very well. Incessant name-calling and petty bickering between Metro and City officials was an annoying and at times degrading spectacle. More serious was the mounting evidence that the faulty, fragmented handling of critical urban issues was leading to poor performance in such fields as renewal, housing, tax reform, economic growth and development, and community services. While the city was slowly sinking, the people at the controls spent too much time arguing over whose hand should be on the wheel.

It was critical that basic reforms take place, and credit is due the provincial government for its initiative. However, while their proposal deserves applause, it equally deserves thoughtful, careful consideration.

The proposed changes are much too far reaching to be given only cursory or superficial examination. After all, the Provincial Government is about to introduce legislation that will vitally affect the future of our city. This is not a slight amendment with only limited impact. It is a move to fundamentally redesign the way that one-half million people will govern themselves for many years to come.

Local government has increasingly become more important in our lives. There was a time when it performed limited tasks. It was really not much more than a caretaker; providing basic services and maintenance. That is no longer true. Now the role of local government reaches into virtually every phase of life, and the decisions made by local government can drastically alter the way we live. Just think of the newspaper headlines over the past year to gain some sense of the significance of those decisions being made at the local level – a major program of downtown development, plans for urban renewal that will affect thousands of inner city residents, hundreds of millions proposed for a complex urban highway – expressway system and the list could go on.

The accelerating growth in importance, size of task and impact on people of local government is happening right across Canada. Yet while the functions of local government multiply and its tasks grow bigger, the capacity of existing structures of local government and the abilities of those who operate the structures have not appeared to keep pace. This is a fact recently documented in a

report on urban management by the Federation of Mayors and Municipalities.

This disparity between what needs to be done and the capacity of local government organizations to respond, will become more serious as we move into a decade of increasing urbanization and ever-growing complexity of urban life. It has been estimated that Greater Winnipeg will reach a population of over 700,000 by 1985. If one looks at the estimates of the World Health Organization, that for every 1,000 new people the average North American city requires —

- 382 acres of land for residential development
- 8.8 acres of school and recreation development space
- 8.4 school rooms
- 100,000 extra gallons of water per year

then one can see that the single job of providing for future physical development needs of this city is immense.

The job of providing for the future city, however, goes beyond requirements of physical expansion. People in cities must contend with a host of complex issues as they strive to shape a decent life for themselves in an urban world. Where to find decent accommodation, the deterioration of the environment, the dissolution of community and neighbourhood ties, the search for choice in recreation and entertainment, these are the kinds of questions posed by the fact of urbanization.

In Greater Winnipeg, there are several specific issues that will stand out as a priority. A partial list would be:

(a) There is a settlement of disillusioned people occupying the central core of the city, with more being added every day. They are often the new arrivals from the rural areas, coming with expectations for better life, only to find a place on the welfare roles. The existing systems of social services, education or government deal with them only in a glancing, partial way, their traditional approaches not designed to effectively help in the transition to urban life.

(b) The local tax system provides neither sufficient resources, nor fair distribution. It encourages land speculation and discourages rehabilitation. It falls unfairly on a large number of wage-earners and creates hardships for the elderly landowner. Piecemeal tinkering won't suffice, there must be a major overhaul.

(c) Growth and expansion of the city has been handled in a sporadic, often unthinking fashion. We allow the city to sprawl in several different directions without real rational choice or sense of objective. This results in high costs for homes, and too many sub-divisions of undistinguished quality. Large-scale land assembly by public authority, combined with an efficient transportation network could serve to consolidate the growth areas of the metropolitan

region. Mini-town or satellite town development is a way of utilizing cheap land and modern technology, to provide low-cost housing in a livable environment.

(d) The human dimension of city life is too often forgotten. Cities are enjoyable and exciting because of the choices they offer, not because of tall office buildings, or massive building projects. The scale of development must be reduced. Small vest-pocket parks, scattered throughout for old people to sit and children to play, open markets for browsing, clusters of specialized restaurants and shops, play spaces, squash courts, swimming facilities should be available to all people, not just to those who make over \$10,000 a year. These are the kinds of places that give a city vitality and color.

The list could be extended. What is important is that the above priorities show that a very different kind of local government is needed in order to give leadership to this community in finding answers for the future. We cannot approach the issues of the next decade with a form of government designed in the past. A new set of institutions and a new style of local government are necessary to meet the sophisticated, difficult problems of managing the future needs of this city.

Obviously, then the reform of local government is important to citizens of this city. It is important to know what the proposals are, how they might work, and if they really will provide us with effective means of government for the future.

There must be wide-spread discussion of these proposals and discussion that is knowledgeable. So far, the comment on the proposals have come mainly from the aldermen, councillors and mayors of the existing municipalities. That is to be expected, and they should be listened to.

But, they are not the only voices that should be heard in the debate. They have a vested interest in what the changes will be, as they stand to either gain or lose power, privilege or maybe even office. They cannot be counted on for an entirely dispassionate point of view.

This collection of commentaries is presented in the hope that they will help to widen and enrich the debate. The articles in this collection have been written by men who are competent in their own field and independent in their view. They are interested in what happens to this city, but are not personally involved in the existing organization of local government.

Their insights and opinions should be of use to those citizens who are also interested in what happens to Winnipeg. They are designed to give different perspectives, introduce new aspects and make suggestions on how the government proposals might be improved.

This is a time for every citizen of the city to become fully aware and

involved in the decisions that are to take place. The provincial government has asked for involvement and in their community meetings is actively seeking it. After the legislation is introduced in the Spring, there will be a further opportunity for a representation of public views. So, hopefully this collection may be a spur to thought and perhaps action. The people of this city have the opportunity to participate in the shaping of the basic structures that will govern this city in the years to come. It is an opportunity that should not be ignored, but should be pursued to the fullest with the aim of building a good form of government that will well serve our city now and in the future.

## THE POLICY PAPER IN BRIEF

— by Jim Cassidy

The government, when looking at modern urban community problems stresses that “It is the people who make the community — not merely the structural forms they have devised over the years to help them accomplish their common ends. Structural forms, governmental set-ups, all these things are meaningless except insofar as they serve the people who live within them.” The government identifies three main roots of internal problems — fragmented authority, segmented financial capacity, and lack of citizen involvement. The government also recognizes that the last of these roots is the most difficult to deal with.

As regards the Boundaries Commission Report, the government while agreeing with many of the concepts and principles expressed therein, could not find itself in agreement with the major recommendations of it. The primary reason for this was that its proposed structures would not, in the eyes of government, provide the necessary community level structure through which the citizen could gain easy access to all sections of government.

The government proposed that all major services should be unified but the political processes of local government must be decentralized and brought closer to the people. “We wish to make it completely clear, however, that it is the absolute conviction of this Government that no attempt at urban reform can succeed unless it succeeds in strengthening the sense of identification and intensifying the communication, between the citizen and his local government.”

There has been a trend in recent years towards improving efficiency and quality of services, on the one hand and making governments more remote from the people on the other hand. In light of this, the government is proposing that all major urban services and fiscal resources be unified under one central council. This council will be “so elected and its duties so arranged, as to afford the maximum direct contact, communication, and interaction between the citizen and his elected councillor.”

In order to provide better representation for the people, the government proposes that:

- Greater Winnipeg would have a unified council consisting of 48 members.
- There would be at least one representative for approximately every 10,000 people.
- No municipality would have less than three elected representatives.
- Since some municipalities have an insufficient population base to yield the three necessary representatives, the following consolidations would be made:



East Kildonan and North Kildonan  
Charleswood, Tuxedo and Fort Garry  
Old Kildonan and West Kildonan

Each municipality would be divided into at least 3 and at most 22 wards, which would reflect as accurately as possible, not only existing municipal boundaries, but also natural and familiar community groupings.

The new central council would elect from its membership a chairman known as the Mayor. This council will be responsible for all major urban services and policy decisions. A system of committees is proposed in order to facilitate the council's decision-making and the policy execution role. Four major committees have been proposed; an Executive Committee make up for the Mayor, the chairman of the other three committees and three other members elected at large; a Committee on Planning and Development, on Works and Operations and a Committee on Finance. The Executive Committee would, in fact, be the major policy and decision-making authority.

The administrative body — Board of Commissioners — would be the focal link between the council and the administration. It would be composed of senior civil servants dealing with the Council's committees, the Mayor and a Chairman. No method of appointment is made clear in the report. The Board would make recommendations on all matters concerning the carrying out of the executive and administrative functions and would be responsible to the central council for general management, direction and control of the city's administration.

The Community Committee concept grew out of the desire to devise at the community level a framework within which the citizen could clearly perceive the issues affecting him and act forcefully and effectively in his own self-interest. There will be eight Community Committees, one for each municipality and each will have at least three councillors. The Community Committees will be local committees of the Greater Winnipeg Council and will be responsible for local services in their immediate area. Each councillor elected from a local ward would become automatically and simultaneously a member of the municipal Community Committee and a member of the Greater Winnipeg Council. In this way he would have two roles, one being a member of the executive decision body and the other being the access vehicle through which people could reach the local government system. The Committees would have no law-making or fiscal powers or collective bargaining role with regard to the provision of services for which they are responsible.

Each Committee would have a dual role, an administrative, and a communicative one, with the latter being of a more important, permanent and stable nature. It is suggested that the Committee could best achieve this communication between citizens, politicians and officials by forming aggregations of 3 to 6 wards and therefore three to six councillors representing natural community lines.

As regards representation and access of the people to the levels of government problems could arise in the smaller communities if their elected councillors were appointed as Mayor, or members of Executive Council. For example, a Mayor who is a councillor from Transcona, would be Chairman of the Central Council, member of the Executive Committee, member of the Board of Commissioners, member of the Community Committee, and he would still be expected to be available to the people — a virtual impossibility.

Because local government does not exist in a vacuum, the provincial government will find it necessary to effect, at their level, a parallel and complementary reorganization. In order to create clarity and coherence in the division of authority between the two levels of government the province will create a single focus, a minister responsible for urban affairs. The minister will administer the Act establishing the new local government and co-ordinate and improve the performance of the provincial government in its relationship with the Greater Winnipeg Region. The government also supports the stated federal intent to co-ordinate federal roles affecting the cities and urge a substantial increase in the level of federal support for urban development.

As regards the jurisdictional relationships between the three levels of government, there is a need for ascertaining quickly who, at which level of government is doing what and how it is affecting whom in what way. To do this they propose to develop and apply a system of urban accounts which would record all public activities in the Greater Winnipeg Region. These urban accounts would serve as a means of evaluating programs as to consistency and standards. They will record the level and quality of the programs being provided and analyze the effects of these programs on the urban environment and the people in it. These urban reports in addition to being a basic reference point for inter-governmental relations would also become a major stimulus to public information and discussion.

During the period of transition, the Minister and the Cabinet Committee would meet with members of the new regional council to execute smoothly the transition process. The Cabinet Committee will be supported by technical staff from both provincial and local jurisdictions and will ensure that proper consultation is carried out with the organizations involved in the transition.

The government proposals include an equalization of mill rates throughout the Greater Winnipeg Area. The government intends to proceed with an equalization of the municipal mill rate, although an alternative involving an additional partial equalization of the education mill rate is also being considered. The "few" municipalities that would experience an increase in taxes because of this move would have that increase subsidized by the government at the rate of two-thirds of the increase the first year and one-half the increase the second year.

## A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE MAJOR PROPOSALS

- ( 1) Access and Opportunity for citizen involvement and participation
- ( 2) 48 member executive central council
- ( 3) Mayor of Central Council elected by councillors
- ( 4) 6 member executive committee
- ( 5) 8 community committees
- ( 6) Dual role for councillors
- ( 7) Council Commissioner administrative system
- ( 8) Equalization of mill rates
- ( 9) Provincial Minister of Urban Affairs
- (10) Implementation date of January 1, 1972.

## A Comparison of the Government of Manitoba and Local Government Boundaries Commission reports dealing with reorganization of Local Government in the Greater Winnipeg Area.

— by David G. Henderson, M.Arch., (C.P.)

*The Provisional Plan for Local Government Units in the Greater Winnipeg Area* as prepared by the Local Government Boundaries Commission and the Government of Manitoba *Proposals for Urban Reorganization in the Greater Winnipeg Area*, (referred to as the Policy Statement), were prepared within different terms of reference, with different motives, and with divergent objectives. To compare the two reports is to attempt to compare apples and oranges.

The Provisional Plan of the Commission was designed to engender discussion and reaction with respect to local government in the Metropolitan Winnipeg area for the next 10 - 20 years. Under the terms of the Local Government Boundaries Commission Act, public hearings are required to be held in connection with the Provisional Plan and prior to any final plan which would recognize all submissions and reflect the best advice and information presented to the Commission. The letter of transmittal on page 5 of the Provisional Plan report states, "If public discussion of this Provisional Plan will bring to light principles or facts which were not considered, they will be studied and carefully reviewed by the Commission before preparing the final plan."

The preamble to the Policy Statement of the Government of Manitoba expresses the hope that it "will provide a basis for wide-spread public discussion and debate, prior to legislation being introduced at the next session of the Legislature."<sup>1</sup>

The initial comparison, if one can be made, is that the Commission chose to review local government and any reorganization of same from the point of view of the long term possibility of strengthening and enhancing the principle of self-government. As further stated on page 10 of the Provisional Plan; "Change should not be made simply for the sake of change; rather, changes should be made only for the purpose of achieving definite benefits."

The Policy Statement of the Government on the other hand states that "this area now lacks the governmental structure to make it an effectively functioning entity;"<sup>2</sup> and "the nature of the community has changed so radically that the familiar and traditional structures, which in the case of Greater Winnipeg served it well in its early stages of growth, can no longer meet the demands now placed upon them."<sup>3</sup> Also, in reference to Greater Winnipeg, "it has become the greatest single repository of social ills within the Province."<sup>3</sup> These and other observations expressed throughout the paper strongly emphasize that conditions, in the opinion of the Government, are in such a state that a major

restructuring of local government and the creation of a new administrative and development mechanism is essential to the welfare of the Greater Winnipeg area.

The Commission, which observed that the current two-tier structure of local government could be greatly improved through legislation and relatively little disruption of existing units of local government, did not share the same concern with respect to the capacity of Greater Winnipeg to accommodate the demands likely to be generated by urban growth. The Commission did not overlook the fact that local self-government is languishing. However, upon review of the varying points of view with respect to the relevancy of local government, the Commission came to the conclusion that "local self-government must be preserved and strengthened; the trend toward centralization must not be allowed to swallow up and obliterate truly local self-government. That is not to say that an area-wide authority is not essential for some services that are area wide in nature. The Commission is concerned that the administrations of local government units be kept to a manageable size, both from the point of view of the elected representatives to whom the Administrations are responsible, and from the point of view of citizens who must deal with the Administrations in connection with various and sundry services."<sup>4</sup> The Commission therefore determined on the basis of study of current problems with respect to Metro and other municipal governments, that the need for a dramatic change in local government was not proven. Perhaps submissions at future public hearings would have produced evidence to the contrary and thus would have influenced the recommendations of any Final Plan. This was certainly the experience with respect to the production of the Commission's Final Plan for an Education System in Manitoba.

The Policy Statement of the Government on the other hand records substantial disagreement with the conclusions of the Commission and states, "... we find ourselves in fundamental disagreement with the Commission over what the critical problems, those most urgently in need of solution, in fact are."<sup>5</sup> In effect, the Government of Manitoba sees the need for immediate reform of local government requiring a new political and administrative structure.

Herein lies the crunch. The Commission reviewed the current status of local government and found it wanting with respect to representation by local authorities on the metro authority; a clear delineation of functions and responsibilities between levels of government; a degree of over-representation and at the same time lack of accountability by elected officials to the electorate; and the need for a new approach to renewal and development of the central core area.<sup>6</sup> However, it concluded that the apparent problems could be rectified with little disruption of the present two-tier structure of local government. In fact, on page 66 of its Provisional Plan, the Commission states; "The Commission believes that radical changes would be worse than no changes at all."

On the other hand, the Government of Manitoba has produced a statement of policy to be expressed in the form of legislation within two to three months of release. The Government appears to be of the opinion that there is urgency

with respect to the restructuring of local government if the Greater Winnipeg area is to develop in an orderly and efficient manner.<sup>7</sup>

Two points of view, two conflicting opinions.

Strangely enough, both the Government and the Commission appear to agree on a number of concepts and principles. As stated in the Government Policy Statement, "it (the Government) shares the Commission's concern that a closer relationship exist between the citizen and his local government and concurs in the guidelines which the Commission set out for itself in this regard:

'Local Government is a means of effective communication between citizens and their elected representatives of all levels of government.'

The Government also agrees with the Commission's recommendation that local government representation be based on a system of wards comprising some 10,000 residents each, and in this connection what is of particular interest is the Commission's statement:

The Concept of neighbourhood, borough or ward councils, which underpin the Council of the Municipal unit of which the neighbourhoods, and wards are segments and which are given limited and particularly local powers and responsibilities to exercise and execute; this concept can be incorporated into any local structure.<sup>8</sup>

The Commission had considered the neighbourhood council or ward system futuristic but possibly one which could evolve under the recommended Regional Government plus Nine City Plan or future amalgamations of a number of those cities.<sup>9</sup>

It is at this point that the Government expressed another point of view, namely that this concept of neighbourhood councils was modern and functional in the context of the Twentieth Century urban complex.<sup>10</sup>

Again — two different points of view. Two conflicting opinions.

The Government recognized the value of the research and data produced by the Commission.<sup>11</sup> This research was developed by the Commission in preparation for its study of the question of the optimal structure of local government for the Greater Winnipeg area. As stated on page 30 of the Provisional Plan, "The Commission was ever mindful of the danger of coming to a hasty conclusion based on nothing more than hunch, supposition, guesswork and vague gen-

eralities." The research included appraisal of the social, economic and physical aspects of the Greater Winnipeg area as well as study of the factors which are likely to apply and affect the cost of any amalgamation. The latter study identified a number of factors which are likely to affect costs of any amalgamation. Regardless of the scale of an amalgamation, the distribution of local and area-wide functions are of less significance than their social value. For instance, the significance of services delivered at the local level can be such that the costs can be ignored while area-wide services will be required regardless of the cost, simply to guarantee their provision. The specific factors which were identified by the Commission as likely to affect cost over the initial ten years of amalgamation were as follows:

First: Services are demanded by and will continue to be demanded by people, such services being local in nature and with which citizens can identify and in which they want to be involved. These services are local and as such not critical to the capacity of the total urban area to function effectively.

Second: Services which are critical to the holding together of the total urban structure and involve inputs of the total community as well as senior levels of government.

These factors represent nothing more than maintenance of the status quo, the estimated costs of which were estimated in relation to an eight-city, three-city and one-city concept with anticipated distributions of functions in each case. The study found that the costs of upgrading salaries to that of the predominant unit of any amalgamation plus current total expenditures and the possible additional expenditures resulting from distribution of functions was measurable and that these would be costs directly related to the scale of amalgamation.

Third: The study also identified the possibility of inputs required to offset the inefficiencies and deficiencies in standard of service which will only become a factor as amalgamations take place.

Fourth: In addition it identified the tendency for any new unit of local government to upgrade services throughout its jurisdiction to a standard equal to at least that considered desirable to present day requirements.

These four factors were considered to be measurable and likely to come into prominence during the initial years of amalgamation (3-4 years).

However, the study also identified two other factors which cannot now be measured in terms of cost.

Fifth: The degree to which future decision-makers may be inclined to raise the level of standard of service beyond the initial up-grading, due to new leadership, resource, population and value characteristics at that time as

opposed to the present.

Sixth: The massive input which will be required to meet the major needs of the society of tomorrow, an input beyond the capacity of local or regional governments. While this input will be influenced by Federal and Provincial requirements in the area of urban development, the degree of financial input by these authorities cannot be determined.

The study concludes that the anticipated input required in order to maintain the status quo, make up deficiencies, raise the level of service and deal with urbanization are in part, inevitable, but will be felt much sooner by the total community if any amalgamations which occur are other than minor.

The Commission's study which included a substantial review of all literature dealing with costs of amalgamation and optimum size of cities, found no real evidence that large amalgamations produced efficiencies and economies of scale. On the contrary, the evidence tended to indicate otherwise.

Therefore, the Commission upon review of cost data relevant to the Greater Winnipeg situation, concluded that costs would result from amalgamation and while certain that these were measurable and might be controlled to a degree, the evidence was to the effect that the greater the degree of amalgamation, the greater and sooner the costs to be met by the citizens of the Community. The Study also observed that there was no evidence that the resource base of the community would increase as a result of amalgamation, certainly not to the same degree as likely costs.

The Government Policy Statement could not accept what it refers to as the premises and assumptions of the Commission with respect "to costs and the methods by which the common goal of heightened citizen participation in local government can be achieved."<sup>10</sup> However, here the comparison ends for the Policy Statement does not produce any evidence or arguments to counter the findings of the Commission's research.

The major recommendations of the commission which call for more strength in the Regional Authority (Metro), greater accountability to the electorate by locally elected officials, a clearer definition of the distribution of area wide and local functions, and representation on the Regional Authority by the local municipalities were not acceptable to the Government. This in spite of the fact that in principle they agree on the need to improve the quality of local government as well as the capacity of citizens of Greater Winnipeg to have an effective say in the policies and programs which affect them.

The Government Paper proposes to unify all major urban services, and all fiscal resources at the disposal of the community, under one central council. A system of wards grouped into Community Committees is proposed to afford citizen participation in local functions and affairs. A restructuring of the admin-

istration of municipal government is also proposed. When implemented, Greater Winnipeg will operate under a new form of local government, the important by-product of which will be the closer relationship between citizens and their local government.<sup>12</sup> As stated in the Government Policy Statement, "The important point, however, is that the avenues of political access will have been opened, and if openness is exhibited, citizens, in our view, will respond."<sup>13</sup> The Government is also of the view that "the proposed urban reforms afford a unique opportunity to call forth and to put to best community use the tremendous integral (but now latent and dormant) strength which lies in true community identification."<sup>14</sup>

The Commission agrees that these suggested results can be achieved through reorganization of units of local government. However, it does not agree with creation of centralized municipal government and administration and by virtue of its recommendations for a stronger Regional Authority and the operation of nine municipalities within the Metro area, gives weight to its conviction that "the implementation of its (The Commission's) recommendations will not only strengthen local government in Metropolitan Winnipeg and equip it to cope with the challenges of the future, but also the implementation of its recommendations will generate the kind of co-operative yet diverse urban situation that will make the Metropolitan Winnipeg area a significant urban center of the world."<sup>15</sup>

What do you think?

The Commission produced a report and supporting evidence in which it concluded that reform of local government in Greater Winnipeg should evolve under a two-tier system of government in as much as evidence indicated that the factors which will influence the costs of major reforms may well come into play and in fact not justify the benefits such reform is purported to offer.<sup>16</sup>

The government is of the opinion that the assumptions and concerns of the Commission are not on sound ground and that the benefits of the reform proposed by Government will far exceed any costs or inconvenience.

Time will tell.

One wonders, however, had the Commission's Provisional Plan been the subject of public hearings and a Final Plan produced prior to release of the Government's Policy Statement, would the final recommendations have produced verification of the Commission's original conclusions, a further alternative, or confirmation that the public indeed preferred the one city concept?

We will never know.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Proposals for Urban Organization in the Greater Winnipeg Area, p.(i)
2. Proposals, p. 1.
3. Proposals, p. 2.
4. Provisional Plan for Local Government Units in the Greater Winnipeg area, pp. 25 and 26.
5. Proposals, p. 8.
6. Provisional Plan, Chapter V, pp. 27-29.
7. Proposals, p. 32.
8. Proposals, p. 6 and 7.
9. Provisional Plan, p. 49 and 50.
10. Proposals, p. 7.
11. Proposals, p. 6.
12. Proposals, p. 18.
13. Proposals, p. 22.
14. Proposals, p. 13.
15. Provisional Plan, p. 66.
16. Provisional Plan, pp. 26 and 68.

Issue-Handling,  
The Division of Powers,  
And the Quality of Government  
In The New Urban Community

— by Philip H. Wichern, Jr.

Amongst this last year's Christmas gifts was one given by the Manitoba Government to all of us who are residents of the Greater Winnipeg area: a new system of local government. In this brief inspection, I will attempt to examine this new system in terms of three basic questions: How capable will the system be in handling the issues emerging in urban areas of this size? What are the implications of the new division of powers between tiers in the system? And, finally, to what degree will the new scheme actually be an improvement as a local governing unit? In the interest of clarity, I will devote a section to each of these questions.

**I. Issues**

Any urban government must be judged first and foremost on its ability to meet the needs of the people within its boundaries in the most representative and efficient way possible. This means that it is able to handle issues and resolve conflicts which arise within those boundaries, as well as to marshal the resources necessary to make the process viable.

It used to be that this problem was solvable at the local level by authorities independent of each other. However, the White Paper is quite correct in describing these times as related to a previous age of small-scale issues and conflicts:

Greater Winnipeg is no longer a frontier town. It is no longer an agglomeration of village communities formed in the interest of convenience and basic service needs in a primarily agrarian environment. It has become an industrial complex . . . in almost ever sense, a modern urban city in a modern, technology-oriented environment. (White Paper, page 31)

A primary change, the world over, is the trend toward an increasing scale of interdependent economic and social activities based on the organizational integration of human resources and nonhuman energy and machinery. In this technological environment, we live and work in "a vast complex, and completely interdependent process" (Greer, page 43). Sometimes we forget that our lives are much more dependent upon social control and order than was the case a short number of years ago. For example, we save, shop, get paid through a system of

banking accounts, credit cards, and a complex network of financial transactions. Similarly, we drive to work across the city, dine in another part of town, see a show in another, and attend our favorite clubs in yet another.

The consequences of this environment for local government have been enormous. The needs and issues which used to be distributed in various urban villages now spill over and overlap traditional jurisdictions. Recall, for example, the increase in scale of public safety problems — the demands placed on police and fire services these days. In addition, a whole new set of issues has accompanied the technological-industrial evolution: competition for attracting industrial development in municipalities, costs of expanding and increasingly demanded public services of higher quality at the local level (remember the outdoor privy, coal burner, and dreyman?), pollution, planning, etc.

The Manitoba Boundary Commission recognized this challenge of emerging issues in its report:

The Metropolitan Winnipeg area, similar to other large urban centres, is faced with a widening range of problems such as expansion of municipal services and provision of new services, the provision of adequate housing, the achievement of intelligent siting and initiation of . . . (land) . . . development . . . and the foresight to obviate potential traffic congestion . . . (as well as problems related to) . . . the adequate use of leisure time by people in all age groups, a greater degree of protection for the air, water, and land resources of the area, a greater capacity to manage and control large masses of people in an area when civil disobedience and demonstration appear to be on an increase . . . (etc.). (Commission, page 29)

Given the change in the nature of the community in which we live, and the corresponding change in the nature of the issues confronting local governments in urban areas, can these problems be most efficiently handled in a democratic (participative) framework of many local governments. The Boundary Commission has said "yes". The experience of North America (and metropolitan centres around the world), and the opinion of the White Paper is a definite "no":

The Greater Winnipeg area has this in common with a great many urban centres in North America — the nature of the community has changed so radically that the

familiar and traditional structures, which in the case of Greater Winnipeg served it so well in its early stages of growth, can no longer meet the demands now placed on them . . . Every citizen of Greater Winnipeg, regardless of where he lives in the community, is familiar with the result. Streets have become increasingly entrenched and more difficult to deal with, and housing more expensive and difficult to obtain . . .

. . . the problems and difficulties of the urban community transcend jurisdictions and boundary lines. Yet the effective power to deal with these problems has been, and is, sharply delineated and circumscribed. (White Paper, page 2)

This position may not seem at first to be defensible to the citizen who has not attempted to get zoning changes, building permits, accident reports, etc. However, the more one is involved in day-to-day urban problems, the less relevant and more unjustifiable existing jurisdictions become. Still, most citizens will be familiar with the Metro-municipal conflict which has impeded policy coordination in such important areas as urban renewal and industrial plant location.

If the existing structures and services are not combined, further situations may develop for which the Winnipeg area is not prepared. For example, one of the strategist-activist members of the FLQ was from this area. Suppose a widespread attempt at disruption, from whatever source, occurred in Winnipeg. How could the issues in such a situation be handled with less than one government and one police force? The present system demonstrates the limits, as well as extent, of informal cooperation as a device of urban policy.

The White Paper would place all major services under the control of a unified Council, with a Commission form of administration responsible to the Council through policy committees. This is by far the most reasonable proposal to solve the issue-handling problem. The two-tier system simply does not provide the unified authority which centralizes administration of services. At the same time, the White Paper provides for Community Committees to supervise the delivery of services in local areas and to serve as communication centres for citizens wishing to participate in making public policy for their own, or the whole, area. The locally (ward) elected councilmen would represent these interest, but within a policy-making framework which gives them a much more sufficient resource base and policy scope ( the whole urban community). Within this framework they are more likely to see local issues in the light of the whole urban area, rather than simply in terms of the area within their Community Committee boundaries.

This, it seems to me, is the best way of handling the types of issues which are

emerging in urban areas in North America, and the prognosis for the proposed system in this regard would seem to be excellent.

## II. Division of Powers

Our second question is "what are the implications of the division of powers between tiers in the new system?" The reader will recall that the unified Council is given authority over all major services in terms of revenues and allocations, law-making, and hiring and firing employees. The Community Committees are given administrative and limited allocative powers:

A number of services will remain at the local level. It will be the function of the Community Committees to administer these services . . .

It will also be the function of the Committees to administer those services generally deemed to be essentially local in nature such as community centres, local parks, playgrounds, libraries and recreational facilities.

With regard to those services now provided by the area municipalities which will . . . continue to be a local responsibility, the Community Committees would have authority to:

- (1) consider and propose programs with respect to these services;
- (2) submit to the Central Council the proposed budgets for these services; and
- (3) supervise delivery of these services.

Amounts would be allocated from the overall budget . . . for the specified programs in each Committee area . . . The sum allocated would be a lump sum covering all such programs and in this way permit local flexibility in allocation of expenditures.

The Central Council could delegate to the Community Committee the authority to negotiate contracts for works maintenance projects . . . within limits of the approved budget . . . (but not for . . . any new construction or public works projects . . .

The Community Committees would have no legal authority over hiring or firing

of personnel at the community level, but would have the power to direct and assign local staff. (White Paper, pages 19-20)

From this rather lengthy quotation, the reader may surmise that only the policy-making scraps have gone to the Community Committees. They have neither fiscal, law-making, or collective bargaining powers. They must find their power base in supervisory authority over personnel, limited allocation power over facilities, and contracts to keep up existing public works.

Compared with the well-organized Commissioner form of administration which is also proposed, the Community Committees have little actual power. The hand on the purse usually calls the political shots, and that hand is definitely the Central Council-Administration in this case. Only through their positions on the Central Council and its committees can the local community representatives make their wishes known to local public servants, unless some further mechanism is created by which public service employees are directly responsible to the representatives. As the system stands, the employees will be responsible to their superiors in the central administration upon whom they depend for pay, advancement, pension, etc.

In other words, the exact extent of the powers given to the Community Committees is questionable. Without the basis for power, can there be an effective control over little more than existing public works, city halls, libraries, parks, and recreational facilities? If authority is taken, who does the public employee obey: the local politician or his superior in the central administration? Under these conditions can Community Committees be said to "administer these services"?

In this system, it may be much more difficult for local residents to get changes in the administration or delivery of public services than is now the case. Because the local representative is one out of 48, and the Community Committee members anywhere from three to eight of the same number, the new system may not be expected to provide the same results many citizens now get when they call their alderman for specific things which they need.

Just how demands are channelled and handled will depend upon the organization of the representatives as they form the Central Council, i.e. whether parties or factions dominate. Also an important, but somewhat unpredictable, factor is the working relationship which develops between the members of the Council and the administrative personnel in the centralized public service. Chances are that the days of direct local representation of demands (what the Boundary Commission calls "self-government") are at an end — a sacrifice to the broader framework in which the area-wide issues may be properly handled.

### III. An Improvement?

We have discussed both issue-handling and division of powers. My analysis indicates a major step forward in issue-handling at the expense of the traditional consumer representation which the municipal councilmen have come to represent. On balance, is this new system an improvement in local government?

The answer is "yes" because the new system allows for participation of a new type of Winnipeg residents. The Central Council representatives are elected by wards. The wards are relatively small and homogeneous in composition of population. Ethnic and other groups should have a much better opportunity to elect representatives and make their wishes known on area-wide issues, as well as burning local issues.

In addition, representatives are required to report to their constituents and consult with them in formal community meetings. For local amenities — public works, libraries, recreational programs and parks — as well as the larger issues of area-wide significance, the representative is forced toward more accountability to the people he represents.

The distinct (and intended) possibility of political parties at the local level may enliven what has seemed a dead political process, and may instill broad policy outlines on a currently fragmented and ad hoc-oriented policy process. In addition, the new system may

... create, at the local level, the climate in which citizen interest, participation and active involvement can, and will, flourish . . .  
(White Paper, page 18)

As the White Paper notes, the manner in which people respond will depend upon a number of factors. One is "the existing community patterns ( of political activity) within a given area". Another factor will be "how individual councillors use the opportunity to achieve a heightened relationship to their constituents". The White Paper is optimistic about the first factor: ". . . citizens, in our view, will respond."

The second factor is not commented on in the paper, but is perhaps the more crucial. Any government's quality depends primarily on the quality of the men who govern. In the case of the new system, this is especially important since they must decide the crucial issues of how to provide the various services at reasonable costs on a metropolitan wide basis. Instead of 112 officials in 13 fragmented jurisdictions, the 48 new councillors will hold the power of governing this area.

In the end, the quality of government under the new system will depend, as it should, on the quality of the men who are elected by us. In this respon-



sibility lies the unique challenge which we as citizens have set before us by this innovation. My opinion is that Greater Winnipeg residents can and will meet this challenge. If we do not, it will not be because the Provincial government has not given us the incentive and framework in its Christmas gift.

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## EFFICIENCY, RESPONSIVENESS AND THE CIVIC SERVICE

— by Professor Jim McNiven

“One result (of new local government forms elsewhere) has been, almost consistently, to achieve the desired improvement in efficiency and quality of services. But there is now clear evidence of another result as well — a significant loss of public responsiveness and civic involvement.”

(Proposals for Urban Reorganization in the Greater Winnipeg Area, p. 19)

### EFFICIENCY

The seeming incompatibility of administrative efficiency and citizen responsiveness is noted by the provincial government as the critical question faced in its attempt to restructure urban government in the Winnipeg area. One part of the question, that of raising the level of administrative efficiency, is in fact lightly passed over in the White Paper. The government, though perhaps with good reason, never addressed itself to the question of whether amalgamation would contribute to the solution of those urban problems which it sees as needing solutions in the 1970's. These are:

- a) The separation of planning and development powers
- b) The fragmentation of resources and decision-making power
- c) Disparities in levels of services
- d) Distortions in tax bases and in the distribution of tax revenues
- e) Concentration of social problems in an area which is unable to solve them by itself
- f) Exploitation of the core area by the rest of the city
- g) Citizen frustration due to this fragmentation

One reason why the provincial government can easily assume that amalgamation would solve the important city problems of the present is because it has identified them as being basically due to fragmentation of finances, urban society and political power. There is a large element of circular reasoning on this point in the White Paper. The major problems being defined as those related to fragmentation leads naturally to the assumption that amalgamation will solve these major problems. A second reason underlying this and many other questions ignored by the White Paper, is that the experience of other cities and regions overwhelmingly indicates that larger units tend to be more efficient and, what is perhaps more important, more able to tackle those problems which are multifaceted. A local development authority, for instance, may be able to provide adequate public housing, but without some co-ordinated assistance from employment and social service agencies, such projects soon turn into brick and glass slums, only physically better than those which were razed in the first place.

Efficiency implies an increase in output per unit of input. A man who produces twice as much as another at the same salary is said to be the more efficient of the two. The same analysis must be applied to a unified civic service; however when one approaches cost-benefit analysis in relation to urban programs it is easier to estimate costs than benefits, because the major portion of the costs can be gained from budget projection.

The Local Government Boundaries Commission attempted to estimate the costs of various services based on various plans for urban reorganization. In the body of its Report the Commission adopted a general tone that a single city plan was more expensive and that even if it were not it should still not be implemented. Its projections given in the appendices to the Report were constructed in such a manner as to make it difficult to arrive at a comparison of one-city costs with those of the preferred nine-city plan. It would appear though, that total amalgamation of all services except education would cost, according to the Report, approximately \$2.27 million, or 5.6% more than the nine-city plan, including an equalization of services in both plans. Compared with actual 1969 figures (those used as the basis of the Report's projections), even after equalization of services, the one-city plan would cost but \$1.71 million more, an increase of 4.1%. A later prediction by one of the Commission's members that the costs of amalgamation would be \$18 to \$20 million are not substantiated by the research of the Commission itself. The cost of urban services in 1969 was about \$78 per capita; this would rise to \$82 under amalgamation if the Commission is correct. For \$4 per person, the structural tools necessary for a concerted and systematic attack on the more tenacious urban problems may be purchased and used.

The non-recurring costs of amalgamation are for the most part not quantifiable. Each functioning organization must be considered as an asset to its community and the disruption of the organizations may lead to costs which are effectively "hidden" in the organization. If such disruption is gradual and minimal in scope, this asset may be retained for the benefit of the whole Greater Winnipeg area. Other non-recurring costs, including hiring and transfer of employees and supervisory personnel, rearrangement expansion of facilities may be completed relatively easily and at low cost. Such reorganization need not be financially costly. Larger governments and corporations almost continually experience such shifts without appreciable extra expense.

Structural efficiency may be paralleled by operating efficiency, though the two are not necessarily connected. Large bureaucracies, in spite of North American prejudices and Parkinson's Law, are not by definition inefficient. If they were, they would be good reason for dismantling such corporations as General Motors which employs twice as many people as the Canadian federal service and handles nearly as much money as all levels of Canadian government combined. Operational efficiency in public bureaucracies has been challenged primarily because, unlike private organization, governments have until recently been unable to find any reliable measure of performance which comes close to that of

"profit". The White Paper has intelligently presumed that the use of planning-programming techniques and by implication, the managerial styles which are associated with them, will be central to the operation of the unified civic service. Similar operational reforms have been instituted in the federal government at the federal level and are in the process of being implemented at the provincial level in Manitoba as well.

## RESPONSIVENESS

Unfortunately, heightened citizen responsiveness is considerably more difficult to realize than administrative efficiency. Responsiveness is the result of individual calculations of experiences, hopes and fears. A lack of it, or apathy, is endemic in society as well as its political institutions. Many individuals spend most of their working lives in situations where initiative, concern and independent thought and action are impossible because of the nature of their jobs and it is foolish to expect them to act otherwise outside of their work. Those who take an interest in social activity may be preoccupied by non-governmental concerns; they may be active in a church or obsessed by their businesses or hobbies. Still others are actively alienated from government, because of a commitment to ideologies, bad experiences with governmental agencies or due to an inability to understand how the "system" might be used in their favour. In the final analysis, only a small minority will express a continual interest in governmental matters and a larger minority will sporadically involve themselves in important public issues, if only to the extent of voting.

There are two levels at which responsiveness must be pursued by an amalgamated city government. These are at the level of citizen-administrator contact and at the level of general policy implementation.

### Citizen-Administrator Contact

The first level involves every voter in the city since they all have some contact with city services and agents every day. Water and electricity supplies, police and fire protection, roads and bridges are only some of the "products" of urban government and the nature of the contact between the individual and these products and their producers is critical in the development of underlying attitudes toward city government. These attitudes do not consist of a rejection or acceptance of one set of officials as opposed to another but are oriented toward the nature of government itself. Both the White Paper and the Boundaries Commission Report noted that such an orientation existed in negative sense towards Metro. Both documents tended to ascribe this feeling to the remoteness of the Metro decision-making apparatus from the people; one councillor representing 50,000 people. A second reason which is at least as important, is that the contact of nearly all residents with Metro has consisted only of contact with the "products" which, if good, tend to be ignored and if bad, were cursed. The only exception to this administrative remoteness was the contact between the minority who ride buses and the drivers of these vehicles. This is tenuous contact

indeed, though due credit must be given to these men. Contacts with local government are more substantial. Police and firemen, refuse collectors, library and social service personnel are crucial in developing positive or negative orientations toward city governments.

Contact between citizens and governmental personnel are therefore more crucial than between these same people and the products of the government, assuming these are provided at an acceptable level of quality. Normally such a level is easy to attain by any form of urban government and citizens know this; therefore they tend to take such services for granted. The importance of the experiences of individuals with government employees implies that a responsive citizenry is to a great extent the result of an administration which is in turn responsive to it on a day-to-day level. Within broad limits, such responsiveness is divorced from the types of policies which are implemented; the style of administrative activity being generally more important than its content. Too often administrators concentrate on the provision of efficient service without giving due consideration to the attitudinal effects produced by those officials directly in contact with the public.

The key to successful amalgamation in the long run will probably be the success with which this responsiveness is built into the civic service. The troubles which afflict other large cities may be traced in part to a lack of this type of responsiveness. Administrators including police, have tended to ignore neighbourhood sensibilities and preferences, thus fostering a growing sense of alienation, especially among residents of core areas and within racial or linguistic minorities. Such developments may be easily avoided but the tendency to stress organizational prerogatives at the expense of such public needs, has led administrators to resist satisfactory solutions and encourage unpleasant political action, which is generally visited upon the elected leadership.

An important area inside Greater Winnipeg where such unresponsiveness might make itself felt is in what is called "old" St. Boniface, where a majority of French descent has in recent years managed to reassert its presence in local affairs. The proclivity of those who drew up the White Paper towards rationality in administrative amalgamation regardless of any attendant political irrationality, has already resulted in an uproar sparked primarily out of fear in this group for the survival of what is left of francophone culture in the area. Little has been done to point out the positive potential which amalgamation might have for this area and no assurance has been given that symbols such as bilingual signs, police contact and official notices will be even maintained. In fact, within a centralized and rational civic service, these would probably be unjustified because of their extra expense.

St. Boniface is not the only area of Greater Winnipeg which might generate a positive antagonism toward a centralized civic service, though other areas would probably have grievances in other aspects of administration rather than language and culture. Some problems may be overcome, especially in police

work, by assigning officers to areas where they reside so that positive contact and responsiveness may be reinforced. Others may be overcome through close administrative liaison with the proposed Community Committees, especially if these Committees were augmented by the election of extra members to them. The tension between administrative efficiency and responsiveness at the personal level will be continuous, however, and it would be best to build safeguards for the public into the legislation at the beginning if Winnipeg is not to become a well-administered but homogeneous and apathetic city.

### General Policy Implementation

A more common definition for the concept of administrative responsiveness is the ability of a government to provide those services which are desired by the electorate. Again it is suggested that citizen responsiveness to government is dictated largely by their expectations about government activity; however, where these expectations focused upon individual contact above, they also must be seen in relation to the making of policy as well. Responsiveness in this context, must be divided into two phases. First, people must communicate their needs and desires to candidates and representatives who in turn must be receptive if they are to retain their trust and interest. This is basically a question of political responsiveness and, while it is essential for the operation of any government which desires citizen interest, is clearly outside the scope of this article.

The development and implementation of policies which are in the public interest also depend upon the relationship between the legislative body and the chief administrative officials. If they are not formulated coherently and clearly communicated to these officials it is probably the desires of the civic service itself rather than those of the people. Responsive administration depends upon the presence of a number of factors affecting legislative — executive relations:

- a) Useful information must be provided by the civic service to the legislative body
- b) Close consultation must take place between the civic service and the legislative body
- c) Clear lines of authority must emanate from the legislative body to the civic service
- d) Clear directives must be given by the legislative body
- e) Useful mechanisms for the maintenance of overall legislative control must be established

The structures of the legislative body and the upper levels of the civic service may promote or impede the implementation of responsible policies. The

White Paper has suggested the creation of a central Council which would elect three administrative committees and an Executive Policy Committee. The administrative committees, would act as the vehicles through which the three major administrative departments would report to the Council. They would supervise the work of the civic service and consider appropriate city legislation.

The Executive Policy Committee would have a co-ordinating function, bringing together the information from the civic service, the recommendations of the other committees and the leadership of the Council as a whole, in order to arrive at appropriate legislative proposals. The Committee system would be the center of power in the proposed system, since the Council as a whole is too large for effective operations. The White Paper does not make clear whether these bodies and the Mayor are to keep their offices for fixed terms or just for the period in which they maintain the confidence of the Council.

Administrative leadership would be vested in an appointed Board of Commissioners, composed of a Chief Commissioner, a Commissioner of Finance, a Commissioner of Works and Operations and a Commissioner of Planning. The last three would act as the chief administrative officers of their respective divisions, reporting to the Council through the appropriate committees. The Chief Commissioner would act to co-ordinate the activities of the line administrative officers as well as supervise a number of staff operations such as legal counsel and information processing. The Board as a whole including the Mayor as an ex-officio Commissioner would oversee the Budget Bureau and recommend program alternatives to the Executive Policy Committee. Either the Board would meet as a whole with the Executive Policy Committee in this respect or the Chief Commissioner would act as a liaison. This broad description of the council-commissioner system of local government constitutes the background for a discussion of the five aforementioned factors in achieving responsiveness in policy implementation.

The provision of useful information to Council received a considerable amount of attention in the White Paper. Structurally the provincial government has suggested that a set of overlapping responsibilities for providing information to the Council be imposed upon the Commissioners through the creation of four strong policy and administrative Council committees to which the Commissioners individually and as a whole must report. Presumably the Council committees to be created in the various "communities" would also aid in information-gathering. A second method of gaining information was considered in the proposal for the development of a system of "urban accounts" which should better inform government and citizens about felt needs and previous accomplishments. These urban accounts are a prerequisite for a third method of gathering information — through the institution of a planning-programming budgeting system. The White Paper, by its frequent references to plans, programs and priorities is at least implicitly acknowledging the utility of such a budgeting system in leading to informed policy decisions by the Council.

Close consultation between the Council and the civic service is, structural-

ly at least, not a problem in the provincial government's proposals. One might suggest, on the other hand, that consultation is so well provided for that other factors might be affected by the overlapping jurisdictions and responsibilities of Council members and Commissioners.

The structure, as presented in the White Paper, does not appear to clearly delineate the lines of authority from Council to the civic service. This would be especially true if the Council were to be composed of independent members, all wishing to have a voice in the determination and approval of policy. Conflicts between administrative committees and the Executive Policy Committee would seem to be inevitable, especially under a non-partisan council. Conflicts between the Mayor, the committees and the Chief Commissioner in different variations would also be probable. These would be lessened as the structures find their appropriate "places" in the system though these places would vary as individual personalities had their effect. The use of the single-member district for choosing representatives may both encourage these conflicts where largely independents are elected or non-partisan regulations are instituted. If partisan elections are encouraged the lines of authority may become considerably clearer.

In a number of existing cities in the area, notably Winnipeg itself, elections have been held at large for equivalent seats and a form of proportional representation is used to determine the victors. The single member district, with election by plurality vote, is common elsewhere and at the provincial and federal levels. The proportional representation method encourages the existence of small splinter groups and independents while the single-member district encourages the larger parties and makes possible party landslide victories out of all proportion to the votes they might receive. Normally in any legislative body using a single-member district system and containing more than two parties the party gaining over 33% of the total vote in an election will be over-represented in the legislative body and ones receiving less than 28% will tend to be under-represented. Given the tendency in the City of Winnipeg at present to support at least two "major parties", the Greater Winnipeg Election Committee (GWEC) and a city-level NDP, it would be surprising not to see a Council elected along partisan lines.

With these two major parties contesting the elections a majority of seats will almost always be captured by one of them. This party would ensure the election of its leaders to the chairmanships of the administrative committees and to the rest of the posts on the Executive Policy Committee. Co-ordination of authority would then be established in caucus and the Council would speak to the Board of Commissioners with one voice.

The provincial government has noted in its White Paper that this council-commissioner system has worked successfully in other Western Canadian cities. It has been well-received in Saskatchewan and Alberta but the structures have been considerably different, especially in terms of the number of Commissioners and in the existence of strong committees which are empowered to oversee the civic service. On these grounds it would perhaps be best to reserve judgement

upon the utility of the proposed system in the area of clear and coherent direction.

Council control over administrative action is envisioned in the White Paper as essentially limited to the power of appointment and the creation of an internal auditor, responsible to the Council.

Normally, city governments restrict themselves to actively appointing only such senior officials as the Commissioners and delegate further personnel duties to professional officers under the control of the Board itself. The Council should take particular concern that such a professional selection of members of the civic service not work to the detriment of any of the ethnic groups in the larger urban area and that sufficient attention is paid to the significance that the contact these employees make with the public, both in terms of personality and residence. A deliberate personnel policy aimed at maintaining a local flavour to the city employees in any district wherever possible, should be formulated.

The post of internal auditor is both sensible and necessary in any large government. In spite of complaints made publicly since the distribution of the White Paper about the cost of such an office, it is likely that such an official would save the city money many times over his salary.

The White Paper also suggested a third mechanism for Council control of the civic service. This was to be part of the function of the Community Committee, composed of Councillors who represented specific ward making up a former "city". These Community Committees would meet to hear complaints and suggestions from the residents of the former "city" and pass them on to the Council or the civic service for action. If a partisan election scheme is devised, which also permits parties to "parachute" notables from other parts of Greater Winnipeg into an area, is permitted, the chances of effective representation of many areas will be reduced, either because of the unfamiliarity of the Councillor with his constituency or because he is in the wrong party. The lack of power in such Committees will also mitigate against their being effectively utilized by attention being paid to local needs and complaints. In order to supplement the channels for protest open through Community Councils and to reduce the total workload of the Councillors the post of City Ombudsman might be created by Council. He would resist and investigate complaints about administrative activities, performing a function analogous to that of the auditor with respect to finances. Policy proposals and complaints would still flow through the Community Committees while administrative complaints could be directed to the City Ombudsman.

#### CONCLUSION \*

\* For CONCLUSION please see page 46.  
(technical error)

## COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS AND THE PROJECTED PLANS FOR GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION

— Jim Cassidy

In an argument which is essentially over the merits of one policy or another, one measurement for deciding should be a proper cost-benefit analysis. The policy which has the least costs and the most benefits logically is the preferred alternative, at least on an economic basis. The most sophisticated and proven system of cost-benefit analysis is a form of the Planning-Programming-Budgeting System of PPBS, an economic approach which insists on concrete goals and measureable costs and benefits. According to the experts this system has proven to work well in industry and in areas of defence budgeting and planning. It is the system which is now being incorporated into the federal government organization and even parts of provincial government operations. Its utility is that it can, in certain instances, be used to decide on the best policy to be followed, provided of course; that all of these policies have the same clearly defined and concrete objectives; that all future implications can be clearly identified; that all pertinent costs can be accurately determined; and that all outputs can be measured as accurately as possible.

Clearly the PPB System has many advantages and makes it possible to deal very effectively with economic factors, but the people who use the system are among the first to admit its inability to deal effectively with political and social factors, because of its lack of the techniques necessary to measure them. As Bertram Gross and Michael Springer in their work on Social Indicators suggest, "among the weakest links in benefit-cost-output analysis is the lack of comparable, systematic and periodically gathered social data".<sup>1</sup>

The government policy paper on government reorganization proposed that a system of cost-benefit analysis — perhaps even social accounting will be introduced. Unfortunately, no such system now exists to evaluate what has become a central issue in the debate on the proposals for reorganization namely; what will it cost.

The problem arising out of the present discussion of amalgamation is how to assure, for the people, the maximum benefits of government while reducing costs to the lowest possible point. And the question is, can all of the implications be identified and costs and benefits measured? The economic costs of the required scheme of amalgamated services can be fairly effectively measured, but this alone does not constitute an argument either for or against amalgamation, unless the objective of amalgamation is a purely economic one. Since the objective as stated is a social, political and economic one, then in order to argue against it on a cost basis you must discuss the full range of social, political and economic costs and you must show exactly the social, political and economic benefits those costs are bringing. Because the benefits are difficult to quantify,

there is a tendency to say that there are no benefits. That is to say, to put forth the argument that the social and political factors are static and therefore the argument should be settled on the basis of the economic factors.

This would seem a very simplistic attitude as social and political factors are very seldom, if ever, static. The fact that they are difficult to measure does not mean that they do not exist.

Last year, the cities of Jacksonville and Duval County, Florida amalgamated under one government to produce the largest city in North America – an area of 800 square miles, and, according to the mayor, Hans Tanzler, “The most valuable benefit has been psychological.”

The problem then becomes how do you measure the psychological benefits gained against the costs accrued?

What value do you give to a lessening of tensions between citizens and government because of improved methods of communication? You can measure the costs of amalgamating, but how do you measure the cost, in terms of citizen alienation of not amalgamating? How do you measure the indirect long-term and short-term economic benefits of a cost factor that is pro-rated over a period of time? How do you measure the benefits arising from increased ability to fight fires, control pollution, handle traffic, promote industrial development, combat crime, relate to people, provide for more effective planning of growth and development?

A discussion of costs is meaningless unless you can discuss the benefits arising from those costs. It has been said in economic terms that it would cost \$18 million to carry out amalgamation, but it has not been said, in economic terms, how much the benefits are worth. Are they worth \$1 million or \$40 million? – No one can say.

For every economic cost, there is an economic, a social, and a political benefit – negative or positive – there is still a benefit.

We can recognize that there is this multiplicity of benefits that need to be assessed, the problem is how to quantify them in order to compare them. To do this with the tools and techniques presently available is a formidable if not impossible task considering the primitive state of knowledge. Increasingly there is more sophisticated work being done by scholars such as Bertram Gross, Raymond Bauer, and Eric Janstch, working in the field of social indicators. Hopefully, as well, the provincial government department of Urban Affairs will begin to explore new techniques of similar kind that can eventually be applied to the new government of Greater Winnipeg.

Until then, however, the present arguments are somewhat akin to two small boys arguing over the length of a line. Until someone comes along with a

ruler the argument will never be settled.

1. Bertram Gross, Michael Springer, “A New Orientation in American Government”, *The Annals*, May 1967.

## Party Politics and Regional Government

— by Bill Burdeyny

The province's proposal to introduce a regional government with fewer elected officials representing more people in Metro Winnipeg (as compared to existing local municipal councils) has created a common opinion that such a formation will result in "party politics at the municipal level."

In past years, rarely did candidates in suburban municipal elections rely upon party affiliations and support to attain a seat on the local council. Also, there is no evidence that suburban council voting was ever conducted according to party lines.

However, municipal leaders today are fearfully convinced that the White Paper is designed to import party politics at the municipal level with an objective of a majority of NDP members on the regional council.

How much does the Manitoba NDP government stand to gain if party politics is introduced as suggested on the local scene?

In an attempt to delve deeper into the growing convictions of municipal officials that party politics will be "the name of the game" in regional government, one ought to determine the restrained or hidden political loyalties and affiliations of suburban council members.

It could be said, after studying the statistics, that the NDP has much to gain and little to lose. Out of the 11 suburban councils with a total of 80 mayors and council members, only six incumbents are outright declared NDP standard bearers, 18 are Conservatives, 21 Liberals, one Social Credit and 19 Independents.

The high number of listed Independents include council members who refrain from exhibiting political affiliations or support for any particular party at the municipal level. Without a doubt, most of these Independents would fall into the Conservative or Liberal camp if open declarations were made — opinions expressed also emphasized that few if any would be classed as NDP members.

If one considers all local government representatives in Metro Winnipeg — including Winnipeg and Metro councils — the NDP members would hold 12 of the 112 seats, according to present estimated affiliations.

While most municipal officials today feel party politics will become standard procedure in the proposed new government, some of them feel there would be a better chance getting elected to the regional council on a "Independent" ticket in the first and second year.

St. Boniface Alderman John Gee sees the White Paper as an objective plan by the government to transplant NDP partisans in local government. He calls the proposals a vehicle to establish an extension of the NDP provincial government.

The partisan politics will force other candidates to become party supported due to high financial costs involved in the election campaigns, contends Mr. Gee.

In his opinion, "... one big council will not be possible to operate without party politics. With a 48-member council, you will develop two factions — the majority and the opposition — like a miniature Legislature."

Looking at the proposed 48-ward system, Mr. Gee concludes the concept was purposely designed to include NDP strongholds in parts of Metro Winnipeg which guarantee the regional council at least 16 NDP wards.

North Kildonan Mayor Dave Pekary also foresees party politics generated by the regional form of government. Assessing what competition a candidate might face in the one-city elections, he is convinced the road to victory will be on an "Independent" label.

"This is the way to get elected . . . the only way. Because most people will realize that party politics will not work at the municipal level. There becomes a loss of independence on civic decisions."

The mayor of the proposed regional council would be representing 60 per cent of the province's population. In this respect, Mr. Pekary regards such a mayor as a "second premier" of the province.

The expected party politics action in the regional government elections and responsibilities of elected members will automatically eliminate more than 80 per cent of the incumbents in Metro Winnipeg councils, Mr. Pekary declared.

"They would not be able to run because it will become a full-time job. There's no way they could afford to run for the central council unless the costs are subsidized, such as party support."

In his mind, the civic field would be reduced to a chosen few, such as "... teachers, welfare recipients and unemployed insurance agents."

A noted voice on municipal government is Mayor Abe Yanofsky who shares similar opinions with Mr. Pekary and other municipal leaders.

He is firmly convinced that an Independent candidate would draw more votes for a seat on the regional council than a party standard bearer.

He expects the NDP will run a full slate of contenders in any regional

council election and the extent of party politics involved greatly depends on what the other political parties will do in the contests.

Mr. Yanofsky also feels the government plan was specifically drafted to provide a cabinet-type of government and will result in camp alignments among sitting members.

There will be a new trend in local elections under a one-city plan. The competition for the 48-seats will make them beyond the reach of many incumbents due to time and money involved. This means there could be new faces in the civic arena . . . new types of candidates.

The West Kildonan mayor believes there would be candidates for the big council who are either in retirement, wealthy or self-employed — someone who can devote all their time to the job.

“You definitely will not get many of the same type of people who are presently serving on municipal councils,” he added.

Today, there are 80 municipal council seats in the Metro suburban municipalities (not including the unfilled aldermanic position in St. Vital).

The government’s White Paper proposes creating 26 of the suggested 48 wards in existing suburban area — the remaining 22 wards would be in Winnipeg.

This means suburban representation will be reduced by 54 representatives. At the same time, Winnipeg would benefit in such a transition. The existing three ward-18 aldermen system would be expanded to 22 representatives in 22 wards.

Mayor William Hanks of St. James-Assiniboia pointed out that Winnipeg sitting members on a regional council would only require support from three of the other wards to command a majority vote.

To him, such an operation would develop into a Winnipeg dictatorship, once the majority has been achieved.

The White Paper states that urban community is nothing more, nor less, than the sum of the people. It is the people who make the community — not merely the structural forms they have devised over the years to help them accomplish their common ends. Structural forms, governmental set-ups, all these things are meaningless except insofar as they serve the people who live within them.

Which brings to focus the government’s proposal — or call it a structural form — that Charleswood and Tuxedo form one of the 48 wards.

Mayor Clive Tallin stresses the potential impact of such a formation. Tux-

edo today has four councillors and a mayor doing the civic service for the citizens.

Under the White Paper proposal, Tuxedo could end up with no resident representative, and conceivably so.

Using 1969 statistics and census totals, Charleswood with an 8,838 population could easily outvote the 3,100 residents of Tuxedo.

By comparison, Tuxedo’s total taxable assessment was \$25.5 million whereas Charleswood totalled \$18.3 million. Through Tuxedo’s higher values in buildings, greater revenues and fiscal assets, the town could lose its local government representation in a one-ward system.

Party politics . . . party voting . . . could be a salvation for Tuxedo if a local candidate was able to draw support from voters in Charleswood by virtue of party loyalties.

Voters in suburban municipalities are accustomed to casting ballots “for the man” and not on the basis of “for the party.”

Therefore the contention by municipal officials that an Independent label will be more successful in the regional government election than party candidates, has some merit.

In 1969 there was a concerted effort among NDP constituents to place party candidates in every Metro municipal election. But the objective was never reached. It appeared candidates were more inclined to present the Independent image at election campaigns than make a public declaration of party endorsement.

Yet there are those, like Elswood Bole, a veteran in municipal government, who considers the Independent status as “very nice but naive.” To him, no individual, no matter how right he may be, can accomplish anything on council without the support of his colleagues.

There are many who think the same way as Mr. Bole that party politics can’t help but make for better government, that it stimulates interest and generates competition . . . some of the ingredients that make up the life of a larger council.

The partisan action, if carried out in full force at the regional council level, could provide the spark of interest that apathetic voters need to become involved at the polls.

Party politics is destined to be a major effect of the White Paper in municipal voting.



There is another aspect which may be caused by the White Paper and push party politics into the background. That is suburban resistance to the central city plan.

The 11 suburban municipal councils — made up of varied political followers in one way or another — are capable of organizing into a solid front against the government proposals.

In an all-out fight, the municipal councils are apt to cast aside political leanings and wear the more common cloak of nonpartisan council member. In short, the elected representatives would fight in the manner they are more accustomed to performing duties . . . as individuals working toward a common goal.

Amalgamations on a smaller scale are considered more politically feasible than the overnight changeover from 12 municipalities to one big city. The provincial government displays an air of confidence that this plan is what the people want . . . without even depending on a referendum for the feelings of the people.

The battle to preserve what took many hard years of municipal living may knit the suburban officials into an effective objecting voice of the people.

You can be sure there will be a fight and in the heat of exchanges, party lines and affiliations will be forgotten. Take St. James-Assiniboia which by careful financing earned approximately \$1 million in revenues through its revolving fund in 1970. And that revolving fund looks good to any future mate of the city, including Winnipeg, particularly when it is in excess of \$7 million. This is worth fighting for.

But in the end, the provincial government will implement its White Paper plan and politics will make its full-scale introduction in the municipal suburban affairs.

## Public response to the Boundaries Question

— by Gerry Haslam

For years, and especially since the advent of the Metro System in 1961, urban boundaries — and their implications for taxpayers — have been the subject of heated debate and fervent opinion among many Winnipeggers. Especially in the City of Winnipeg proper there has been a high level of anti-Metro feeling, at least until very recently. But attitudes have been changing, particularly with the development of downtown Winnipeg and the realization by many citizens that a comprehensive system of urban planning must be undertaken in any metropolitan area. Nonetheless, most politicians and commentators fully believed that the report of the boundaries commission and the subsequent release of the government white paper would produce widespread public response and discussion. It was reasoned that since the people of the Winnipeg area municipalities have always taken considerable — if sometimes parochial — pride in their communities, these people would react vigorously to suggestions of change, especially to the suggestion that the municipalities amalgamate or unify.

The simple fact is that it hasn't happened. The 'man in the street' has been very slow to react to both the commission report and the white paper. Less than a year ago an adjustment in assessments of property in sections of the City of Winnipeg produced an overwhelming outcry. But now, proposals which may, in the opinion of some, increase property taxes by as much as \$100 per house on the average has met with the equivalent of a blank stare from the citizenry. Municipal politicians, academics, editorialists and broadcasters have been quick to prove the white paper, but public reaction has been incredibly lacking. The evidence indicates that taxpayers are interested, but, for the moment, they're aloof. It seems that what is needed is a catalyst for public involvement.

Given the low level of response from people who have usually — and recently — been deeply involved in public issues (as for instance with Bill 56 in mid-1970 and with capital punishment late in the year) two questions come to mind: first, why the low level response, and second; will it continue?

The most obvious answer to the first question is that the boundaries question at this stage is immensely complicated by the appearance of two conflicting reports. Indeed, it is complicated in any event, even if there was only one report. No longer is there a simple question to be answered by policy-maker and public alike, a question like 'Do we want one big city?', or 'Should we get rid of Metro?' It was never that simple, but, over the years the news media in Winnipeg has consistently presented to the public just that kind of simplistic view, possibly because news editors and writers never understood all the implications themselves. The whole question of boundaries was conveniently reduced to its lowest denominator by the media and left that way. With the appearance of complex reports, the media made an initial attempt to simplify again, and failed.

Over the period of days after the appearance of the white paper, the media seemed to realize that the issues involved could not be resolved in a few neat phrases, nor could they be understood by the public through the kind of shoddy reporting which has characterized the media generally. Unlike their treatment of Bill 56, where public involvement reached possibly an all-time high, the media chose to hedge its bets, with the result that the people it exists to serve probably went away confused.

The performance of the media in the case of the boundaries commission report and the white paper was very poor, more so with the latter. The Smellie report was generally dismissed as a flop, without much further reference to the depth of the issues involved. For some strange reason, the media seemed confidently to expect that the government policy paper would clear up the 'mess', and lay out a one-city plan in clear terms — clear, that is, in terms of simplicity. Accordingly, when the government pre-released the paper, under the usual news embargo, a day early, few newsmen, it would appear, took the time to read it. Judging from the calibre of questions at the Schreyer-Cherniack news conference on the day the embargo was lifted, the paper might never have been pre-released at all. Coverage of the government's proposals was extensive in terms of quantity, but it lacked both depth and quality. It may also be true that the government designed and timed the report's presentation to minimize public response, but of course the government would deny that.

Given the media's failure to inform the public properly, the vague response should not be surprising. But there is another factor. Both public officials and media commentators have been extremely slow in 'hard' reactions to the white paper. Everyone, it seems, is hedging their bets, waiting to sense the volume of citizen response. Unfortunately, the taxpayers, who are used to being able to choose viewpoints which have been enunciated by others, seemed to be waiting for reaction from their leaders. This double-barrelled vacuum appears to be feeding on itself.

When the subject to be analyzed is public response to an issue, there are two measuring criteria — 'breadth' and 'depth'. Breadth refers to the attention span of the public — how long will they continue to discuss an issue before going on to something more interesting. Depth is a different thing; it refers to the depth of knowledge amassed by the average citizen about a given issue. Bill 56 is the best example of both criteria — the argument went on for months, and the average citizen's knowledge, considering the complexity of the issue, was incredibly good. In the past, urban boundaries, as an issue, has had great breadth, but little depth. At the moment it seems to have neither, but it is beginning to show signs of exhibiting more depth than breadth; many people seem content to wait to respond, which may indicate that when they do respond it will be on the basis of more knowledge than they might presently be expected to have.

So what is likely to happen?

It is difficult to believe that response from the general public will remain at

the present low level. With the appearance in the media of articles and other features further explaining the issue, some response has begun to trickle in. The important facet of that response is that it reflects considerable thought on the part of those citizens concerned. On the basis of the fragmentary returns at the moment it would appear that while there is unlikely to be great breadth of response on this issue the depth of response will be impressive. The public has been slow to get involved, but since the media and the politicians now seem to be taking a more mature view of the issue in terms of its complexity; we can expect more public involvement. But until the matter reaches the floor of the legislature, it is doubtful that the issue will have any major impact. Whether that is due to accident or shrewd planning on the part of the government remains to be seen, but it will be most unfortunate if the issue fails to develop in a public sense. There is even an outside chance that the new boundaries of metropolitan Winnipeg will be settled without any active involvement — except in an indirect way — of the taxpayers.

## A Private Citizen's Point of View

—by Mr. Carson Templeton

I agree completely with the government's thread running through the White Paper that it is absolutely essential for good government to be closely related to the people. In my opinion this is by far the most important aspect, and one that should take precedence over costs, efficiency or anything else. I also feel very strongly that municipal government is the only real contact that people have with democracy, because the other levels of government are too remote. Unless people feel that they can have a say in democracy, and that they will be listened to, then they will tend either to pay no attention to government, or to take the law into their own hands — a situation that is prevalent in many large cities of the world. This lack of communication is simply brought about by our political system failing to grow with the development of the cities. In this philosophy, I agree with the White Paper completely. But I disagree almost as completely that the structure proposed in the White Paper will actually improve communication. I believe that it would make the government considerably more remote than it presently is.

The White Paper, in my opinion, make certain assumptions which are not valid. Page one, in the "Purpose of This Statement" it states: "... this area now lacks the governmental structures to make it an effectively functioning entity" In my opinion this is incorrect. True, there are personality and staff problems between the municipal and the metro government and the provincial government; between various provincial government; and between the provincial and federal government. No structure is ever going to get rid of personality problems, nor should it. The democratic system depends on balances and criticism. Our universities and democratic institutions are based on freedom of thought and expression, which automatically produce dissension; but rather than destroying the institutions, the dissension and testing make them stronger.

There are some who say, "Give me the job of administering the whole area and I will do it better". And for a short time they might do so. But this is a line used by all benevolent dictators; dictatorship is not democracy.

There seems to be an impetuosity of any new government that it can correct all of the faults of the past without perhaps studying the good points. For example, the Liberal government commissioned the Metropolitan Investigating Committee, which studied the problems of local government for four years and came up with a proposal for metro government. Since the government had changed by the time the committee presented its report, the Conservative government in its wisdom did not accept the recommendations of the committee and came out with its own. I believe that in doing so they missed a fundamental recommendation which, if it had been adopted, would have related the Metropolitan Corporation much better to the people; this was representation of the

municipalities on the Metropolitan Council.

Subsequently, the Conservative government formed the Local Boundaries Commission, which after years of study, presented its report. Again, a change of government has taken place. The N. D. P. government does not want to use the findings of this commission and would rather come up with its own. To me, both of these cases demonstrate an improvidence that is possibly based on lack of knowledge, or possibly is influenced by individuals who in trying to correct some things fail to realize the total picture and perhaps do not fully understand precisely what is being done in municipal government.

In the course of my some 15 years working with municipal councils, I have built up a tremendous respect for the dedication and ability of the municipal councillors. I do not agree that the politicians and officials of the government proposed by the White Paper would be "qualitatively better".

If I thought the Community committees proposed in the White Paper would relate to the people, I could accept them. But I do not see how any committee can perform any useful work if it has neither a budget, authority, or responsibility to do anything. Such committees will become inoperative in a very short time, and hence be completely useless. This has been the experience with the Consultative Committee set up by the Metro Act.

If these Community committees could be given authority and responsibility, I think the structure might be workable. But they must be given authority and responsibility for things that matter, not just "community centres, local parks, playgrounds, libraries and local recreation facilities."

Throughout, the White Paper passes comments, such as the individual citizen's frustration because he is alienated. I feel that these are generalizations. If he feels frustrated or threatened, it is more likely because of bureaucracy, because he cannot feel a sense of participation, or because he is paying more taxes than he feels he should. I doubt whether he is alienated because of the form of government.

The average person does not always recognize what his taxes represent or what municipal government does for him. He does not see the need for a fire department until he has a fire; a policeman until he has trouble; snow plows except when it snows.

The news media, (and I do not single out the local media,) report the unusual, and are quick to print news stories about municipal bickering. Comments on bickering have a cumulative effect, so that readers eventually believe that all that municipal government does is bicker. Yet I have never found anyone closely allied to municipal government who says that bickering is a factor in municipal government, and this has also been my experience. There are, of course, personality clashes, but these occur in any organization.

The White Paper goes on to talk about equity in three areas. i.e., services, administration and mill rate. For many years local government has supplied many of the essential services. The level of service is different in each municipality but in reality this does not reflect the desire of the people to keep their standard and thus their costs down to the level which they feel they can afford. If an individual is required to pay a mill rate higher than what he has been accustomed then the immediate result will be a demand for a level of servicing equal to the highest standard.

There are those who argue that everyone should have the same degree of servicing. The same argument could be used that everyone should have a Cadillac because some people have them. But if in spending all your money on an expensive car you are depriving yourself of essentials, then it may not be worthwhile. Similarly, in municipal government, any time the cost of services go up automatically a number of people are prevented from buying homes and some existing home owners must reduce their standard of living to pay the additional taxes.

I think people should have the opportunity to vote on their local improvements and acquire only those local improvements they think, on a community basis, are necessary. When there is a uniform mill rate over the whole area the people no longer feel they are paying for what they are getting but feel that the more they can get from "those other guys", the better. This must raise the cost of servicing throughout the whole area.

If my mathematics is correct the White Paper suggest that 80% of the population would have no change, or a decrease in mill rate in 1970. It would seem to me that this was achieved by averaging mill rates without regard to assessment. Taxes are based on mill rate and assessment and to consider one without the other gives an incomplete answer.

Similarly, a unification of local government staff will result in elevating all staff salaries to the level of the dominant group. This is demonstrated well in the Boundaries Commission Report.

There is no question in my mind, that after the experience of administrative costs when Metro was formed, when St. James-Assiniboia was amalgamated, as well as the experiences in Toronto and elsewhere, that costs will rise very substantially with the amalgamation proposed by the White Paper.

A Council of some 48 members will be a very unwieldy organization. I shudder to think of the time it will take to arrive at decisions. Because of its size it will of necessity become a party system of government where there is a party in power, an opposition and the organizational set up of the provincial government. If this is what is wanted then it should be clearly spelled out and proper checks and balances built in so that it can operate in the time honored parliamentary system.

I do not agree that a Party System of government is the proper system at the municipal level. The reason is the same as the main thread of reasoning throughout this paper. Municipal Government is the main link of the people with Democracy. It is the one link by which people feel that they can participate. This link should not be broken by power politics, forgotten back benchers, influence by outsiders or other pressures of the Party System. In the suburban municipalities today although Councillors are members of various political parties, decisions are made without regard to party politics. In my opinion municipal government decisions should continue to be made this way.

In summary, I feel that to completely change the democratic system at the municipal level with such haste is unwise. The present system has evolved over the years, it has its defects but it has one paramount advantage — people participate. Starting a new system without the understanding of its ramifications including costs and acceptance of the people is reckless.

## CONCLUSION

It would appear that if the provincial government's proposals are adopted, at least one range of urban problems, those related to fragmentation of authority and finances, will be solved. These solutions will not likely be any less expensive for the taxpayers, though many will derive increased direct benefits and most others some increase in indirect benefits. It is doubtful that the larger administration will prove to be any less efficient than those presently in existence.

The White Paper would appear to be at its weakest in meeting its aim of increasing or at least maintaining citizen responsiveness. In stressing the priority of efficient comprehensive services the provincial government may be repeating the lesson it presumably had learned — and expressed in the quote from the White Paper which began this article. Both the responsiveness engendered by citizen-administrator contact and through policy implementation are threatened by a partial lack of realistic safeguards and an overstressing of one set of problems, those due to fragmentation, at the expense of other potential ones, such as citizen apathy. The government, for all its good intentions, may well find it has traded off the one for the other. Hopefully, this danger will consciously be avoided in the forthcoming legislation.

## Conclusion: TOWARDS A DEMOCRATIC CITY

— by Lloyd Axworthy

Perhaps the most serious dilemma of modern day government is whether it is possible to balance the requirements of efficiency and effectiveness with the need for democratic control and responsibility. Our complex urban society needs sophisticated knowledge, highly-trained professional skills and complicated administrative systems to properly manage our affairs. Yet, people should be involved in decision-making and should be able to exercise the rights and privileges of democratic citizenship. But, how is it possible for people to have control over their own affairs if they do not possess specialized information, understand complicated technical problems or know how to deal with the intricacies of modern day bureaucracies?

The traditional trappings of democracy — elected councils, secret ballot, public hearings, appeal boards, basic rights of free speech and assembly are not sufficient in giving people real involvement. If you apply some basic measurements on how well these structures work, then it is quite apparent that we only have the form not the substance of democracy in our city. Very few people are really informed on the decisions being made in local government. Very few have access to the decision-makers. Very few vote. Very few participate.

It is easy to say that these things happen because people are apathetic. But if this is true should we not ask why people are apathetic? Apathy affects people if they have no idea what is happening in government. In a survey conducted by the Institute of Urban Studies in a downtown area of our city, it was found that less than 5% of the residents had any knowledge of several major decisions affecting their area that had been taken by various local government bodies. Once they received information, they became interested and many became involved in trying to change those decisions. For all the massive apparatus of modern mass media, communication is a primary problem. Too many decisions are taken and too many policies made without the slightest awareness by those who will be affected.

What about elections? It is a common place of civic elections that voters hardly know who they are voting for, or have any contact with aldermen once they are elected. Again, another survey by the Institute revealed that less than 10% of a sample population ever had any reference to their local representative, and furthermore, the elected representative was not looked upon as anyone to call upon for assistance. When aldermen are chosen from large area constituencies, such as the ward system in Winnipeg, an alderman can be selected by a small proportion of voters drawn from only one part of the total constituency. As a result, citizens from the rest of the area are basically unrepresented. It is therefore, something of a mockery to suggest that elections in local government offer much choice, or lead to adequate representation.

A contributing cause to this separation of people from elected representatives can be traced to the non-partisan form of local politics. There is a strange mythology, held by many people that there is no place for party politics at the local level. We cherish the ideal of independent, free thinking men on local council. Unfortunately, it does not work that way. The political scientist Charles Adrian compared cities which had party political systems to those that had non-partisan systems and reached the following conclusions:

- 1) Non-partisanship encourages the avoidance of issues of policy;
- 2) Non-partisanship tends to frustrate protest voting;
- 3) Non-partisanship produces a legislative body which has limited changes in membership, thus making for conservatism;
- 4) There is no collective responsibility in a non-partisan body, resulting in the lack of a comprehensive legislative program.<sup>1</sup>

If people cannot discern real choices between those whom they elect, then they are not apt to be interested. Therefore, even though there may be elected councils made up of decent respectable men, there is little sense of relationship or confidence between the representative and the citizen, and very little competition between different points of view.

Perhaps most serious, however, is the inequality of decision-making that exists in the local government arena. Administration of the city is too often a privilege exercised by professional administrators and a few strong organizations. Government administrators are at the center of the decision-making system. They possess the information, the data and the time to work out the policy. Basically, the elected representative just responds to initiatives of the civil servant as there are few other sources of competing policy ideas or knowledge. Citizens must rely upon what they are told, as they have no basis for opposition. When a plan for renewal or parks or downtown development is presented, who can offer an alternative? Yet, it may be that the proposed policy reflects the interests and outlooks of the administrator, and may be contrary to the best interests of the community. When one looks at the drastic failures and wasteful programs of urban renewal that were the pet schemes of the administrative experts over the years, then serious doubts about the wisdom of many government enterprises must be raised.

There are some groups in the community who are in a position to interact with government officials in an equal way. Certain professional groups such as architects, certain industry groups such as realtors or developers, and certain well-organized interest groups such as the Chamber of Commerce or the unions can and do represent their point of view, and can gain concessions and changes in policies and programs. They have the time, the resources, and the personal association with the civic officials that enable them to influence policy. Unfortunately this is not true for many urban residents who are not represented by a group and who cannot command high priced professional help to represent them at public hearings or council meetings. Therefore, we end up with a form of elitism.

Other evidence could be added, but the troublesome fact is clear — there is a serious weakness in the democratic conduct of local government. As Roscoe Martin concludes in his book **Grass Roots** city hall is just as unreachable as the far distant national capital. In consequence, there is a danger that not only will decisions increasingly be taken by an elite, but that the frustrations of ordinary citizens will result in either a deep set detachment from the governing process, or an accelerating trend toward protest politics and open confrontation. If either situation prevails, then the ability of our community to meet the critical urban issues of the future is held in doubt.

### The New Structure

The provincial government has presented a series of proposals that it claims will meet these problems. The question of whether they have the right answer is of primary importance.

First, it should be recognized that no new structure of government can be itself guarantee the existence of democracy. As many modern political analysts have pointed out, the maintenance of a democratic community is only partially affected by the legal framework and organization of government. Far more critical are such factors as economic stability, the distribution of political power, the attitudes and values of the population. One need only be reminded that the most perfectly devised constitution, containing the best arranged democratic system of government was that drawn up in Germany after World War I. But, it could not withstand the pressures created by the severe social and economic divisions that tortured that country and was of little use in inhibiting the takeover of Nazism. Thus, one should not expect that a magic wave of the wand by the provincial legislature will produce a fool-proof system of effective democratic government for metropolitan Winnipeg.

But, it can make a difference. The kind of framework established by the provincial government will either produce a system that will enhance the tendency toward centralized non-democratic rule or apply a brake to these tendencies and provide for a more open, responsive system. The government's proposals should, thus, be tested on the basis of how well they promote the latter development.

### Metropolitanism

To begin with, the basic reorganization of existing municipalities into a metropolitan-regional government can lead to both positive and negative effects. A metropolitan government, by eliminating fragmentation of services, insuring a more equitable distribution of finances, reducing competition between municipalities for industry, and providing for area-wide planning should be able to offer a higher degree of services and thus provide a greater degree of satisfaction for citizens. The fact of the matter is that many urban problems, particularly those dealing in matters of land use, environmental control and industrial dev-

elopment are of such a scale that regional government is required and these functions encompass such a range of activities that it is unwise to separate them on a two-tier basis. There will be increasing demands in the future for regional size activities and there should be an appropriate instrument of government to deal with the problem.

This raises the question of costs. Will the improvement in services justify the costs involved? Answers to that are not easy. You cannot apply the simple bookkeeping procedures of measuring increases in costs that will be incurred through amalgamation. The system of measurement must also include means of analysing the additional benefits and the overflow advantages of an amalgamated administration which takes one into the complicated field of social indicators and measurement of quality in programs. The fact of the matter is that there really is no satisfactory way yet devised of analysing real costs against both open and hidden benefits of government services. How, for example, can you measure in quantifiable terms the advantages to be gained in improved industrial development programs that could result from a unified regional government or the enhanced capacity of a regional government to control pollution? Therefore, the issue of costs must not be debated in simplistic terms. What the provincial government should be doing between now and the introduction of the new scheme is start developing a system of policy evaluation and program effectiveness so that costs of local government can properly be assessed.

There is, however danger in becoming too mesmerized by the prospect of this higher degree of effectiveness. Regional government can become like a dinosaur — with a large body and a small head, leading to clumsiness, unresponsiveness and disregard of local interests. A regional form of government can become a system of government that serves only the most privileged and powerful interest in a city, or a system that reflects the values and outlooks primarily of the professional administrator. Francis Fox Piven of Columbia, an urban social planner feels that regional government swallows up the poor and minorities of the central city and only serves the suburban affluent. He further concludes that such a system “gives substantial decision-making authority to experts who sit in the upper reaches of metropolitan wide bureaucracies, connected by a network of plans and programs to lesser functional bureaucracies.”<sup>2</sup>

The provincial government policy takes note of this danger, but asserts that the system of ward representation and community committees provides an off-setting mechanism that will cater to local interests and counter the power of centralized administration. This is where the gamble exists. If the provincial government is right, then they will have succeeded as few other governments have in blending regional administration with decentralized decision-making.

The government asserts that the key to the plan is what they awkwardly call “community committees”. These committees composed of aldermen from several wards inside a designated boundary are really replacements for the existing municipalities. If one looks at the boundaries for the community commit-

tees, they parallel those of present municipalities. They are in effect forms of municipal councils, except that they only exercise delegated authority from the larger Regional Council. The obvious question to ask is whether this is really an improvement? If people felt distant and out of touch with Winnipeg City Council, why should they necessarily feel more involved with the Winnipeg Community Committee which is an exact duplicate. In effect, these are not really “community” committees. One could challenge the degree of community that exists between residents of River Heights and those of the North End of Winnipeg, even though they will both be part of the same committee. The concept of the committee system seems to be an exercise in giving a new name to an existing organization, but dissolving its ability to exercise independent powers.

### Neighbourhood City Halls

It is useful to compare this idea of the community committee to the idea of “neighbourhood city halls” that has been implemented in several American cities. The idea for neighbourhood city halls appeared in the Report of the Civil Disorder Commission. The Report proposed a two-stage process beginning with the creation of neighbourhood task forces composed of both residents, city officials and the local politicians. The task forces would co-ordinate delivery of services and identify neighbourhood needs. The second stage would be the transformation of the task forces into neighbourhood city halls, complete with their own decision-making powers.

Mayor John Lindsay partially implemented this system in New York where he set up neighbourhood action centers which are staffed around the clock by a combination of city officials and neighbourhood residents. The most advanced experimentation has occurred in Boston where there are some thirteen neighbourhood city halls working out of portable trailers. They handle thousands of requests, complaints and initiate programs for neighbourhood libraries, health clinics and recreation facilities. These city halls work on a small neighbourhood scale, and have at least so far succeeded in developing some sense of local democracy. As Donald Canty, an urban commentator has observed about the system,

“The little city functions much as the ward bosses office once did, and there is evidence that they are gradually changing the neighbourhood residents’ feelings about their government . . . They are also changing if slowly and gradually neighbourhood bureaucracy. The little city hall staffs feel personally responsible to the neighbourhoods they serve. They become neighbourhood advocates and push city agencies for responses”.<sup>3</sup>

This brings us to the ward system of representation contained in the

proposals. Here is a much more exciting potential for giving life and meaning to democracy at the local level. The wards, in the first instance, parallel much closer the definition of community, than the community committees. They are smaller in scale and tend to group people who fall into similar economic and social conditions. The ward is also small enough that representatives or aldermen selected from the area will have to reflect more directly the diverse interests of people in the city. In Toronto, when they changed to a small ward system, the opportunity for minority groups and under-represented people to gain a voice was much easier. Thus, the new forty-eight man council should provide a much more accurate reflection of the interests and outlooks of people in this city and give representation to many people who formally had no power to elect one of their own because the arena of competition was just too big.

Of even greater potential is the opportunity the ward system offers to create brand new institutions of neighbourhood decision-making. One of the great failures of the present local government is that it is not concerned with the small but important problems that are neighbourhood based, nor is it able to identify the particular and peculiar wants and requirements of people in small areas of the city. As a result many problems are ignored or are dealt with in a universal city-wide fashion — just like the army used to issue every soldier the same size of overcoat whether it fitted or not.

Some experiments conducted by our Institute have demonstrated the possibility of creating neighbourhood development corporations where people can take responsibility for making decisions and initiating development in behalf of their own community. The existence of wards, representing a scale of about 10,000 people could provide a governmental framework in which a number of community people could become involved in the identifying of problems, the planning of policy, and the implementing of programs which are of particular need to that neighbourhood. At the same time, there would be a direct linkage through the alderman to the regional government so that there could be worked out a harmony in the plans and priorities of the small community and the regional community.

It is the ward system, therefore, which offers the most rewarding avenue of exploration in developing counter forces to centralization. They are of the proper scale, and more nearly fit the concept of decentralization, as the American experience with neighbourhood city halls seems to indicate. The Community Committee System may have some utility, but it would be wise to re-think whether the emphasis in the proposals should not be placed more on the ward — neighbourhood concept.

### A New Politics

Ultimately, the success or failure of the new structure of local government will rest on the quality and kind of political leadership that emerges. The division of the city into forty-eight wards with the mayor and members of the

executive committee chosen by a majority vote will mean that the existing pattern of local non-partisan politics will not survive. The conditions are now ripe for a new form of coalition to emerge that will contend for control of city government on an organized base. In effect, the system will work in similar fashion to the Cabinet-parliamentary arrangements that now exist at the provincial and federal levels, where a majority chooses its leaders who must continue to maintain their confidence.

This does not mean that political parties of the traditional variety are necessarily the answer. In Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal, there have developed new civic parties devoted to reform, running candidates under clear cut programs. They have begun to make serious inroads in changing the style and approach of local politics and are succeeding in changing the character of local government. The merit of this kind of new civic political formation is that it brings together many groups and individuals who are dissatisfied with the present system and is able to weld together minority groups, middle-class professionals, certain voluntary associations who rally behind the common objective of instilling new life into the city.

The advantages of this kind of political organization are several. They overcome many of the weaknesses of the traditional party structures. But at the same time they are able to offer clear programs of choice and present well-defined alternatives so that people know what they are voting for.

If some form of civic parties do not emerge, we will be left with a system similar to what exists now. Councillors will sort themselves out roughly along N. D. P. — non-N. D. P. lines and the new regional council would be dominated by shifting arrangements and alliances of individuals acting without any clear-cut mandate, or offering any clear direction of policy. The mayor and executive committee would be forced to play the game of survival politics and compromise with so many conflicting interests that they could not provide strong leadership. It would be as if the provincial government was handing the citizens of Winnipeg a brand new ship, but we recruited the same old crew to run it.

To a large degree, the capacity of the provincial government's proposals to create a modern up-to-date system of local government that will overcome the technocratic tendencies of our existing system depends on the way in which the political process is organized. The proposed framework presents the possibility for a new politics. If it is not pursued, and the new framework is allowed to be governed by the old politics then little will be gained and a great deal lost.

This is where the plea for citizen involvement, contained in the government's proposals make sense. The new framework of government opens the opportunity for forgoing a new coalition of citizens who have hopes for building a good city and creating a more democratic way of governing our affairs. That means tough work in preparing and promoting new political ideas, and establishing a new organization to carry them through. This is the real meaning of the



involvement and the hinge upon which the plan will or will not work. The best advice to be heeded by people in this city as we prepare for a new form of government is the one inscribed 2,500 years ago as the motto of the city-state of Athens:

“If the people cease to man the walls  
The city ceases to survive”

#### FOOTNOTES

1. Charles Adrian, “Some General Characteristics of Non-Partisan Elections“, in **Democracy in Urban America**, Oliver Williams and Charles Press (eds.). (Chicago: Rand McNally & Company, 1961), pp. 253-260.
2. Francis Fox Piven, “Social Planning or Politics”, in **Urban Planning in Transition**, Ernest Erber (ed.) (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1970), p. 49.
3. Donald Canty, **A Single Society**, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1969), p. 157.