

The

# Bottomline

The Bottom Line of most financial statements tells us whether a business or government has taken in more money than they have spent. The financial health of an organization is thus determined as well as a value placed on the goods or services provided.

**How can we measure The Bottom Line of non-profit research agencies like the Bureau of Municipal Research?** It must be on the basis of whether their efforts have had impact on public policy, or at the very least, are in a good position to have impact.

The members of the BMR have a right to know what impact the Bureau is having in order to justify their continued support. Therefore we will periodically publish The Bottom Line in order to feature several examples of just how effective we are in our efforts to improve local government in Ontario.

## Robarts Agrees with BMR

The recently completed Commission on Metropolitan Toronto chaired by former Ontario Premier, The Honourable John Robarts, made recommendations to the Provincial government recently that included several reforms previously endorsed by the BMR. The Commission, in fact, reduced their research efforts when it was determined that the Bureau had completed or was working on certain topics such as police and fire protection. The Bureau's reports recommended more control by local elected representatives over police activities and continuation of a decentralized fire protection service. Robarts strongly endorsed these and other recommendations of the Bureau. The provincial government is continuing this precedent of using BMR input as Bureau staff is being consulted on possible legislation aimed at implementing many of Robarts' suggested reforms.

## Vancouver Humane Society Adopts Bureau's Recommendations

Proof that the Bureau's impact is felt beyond Ontario's borders came recently in the annual report of Vancouver Branch of the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. There, much to our surprise, were the major recommendations of our study entitled, "Pet Control in Urban Ontario: The Municipal Role." The Bureau's report was the first effort to gather in one place the experience of various municipalities regarding pet control in an urban setting. Our recommendations on numbers of pets, license arrangements and pet birth control supported and strengthened many Ontario SPCA policy positions.

## Teaching Local Government Reintroduced into Schools

The Bureau's landmark study on "The Teaching of Local Government in our Schools" has led to positive action by the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-carleton. After months of

negotiating with the four area school boards with technical assistance from the Bureau and other groups, a format for reintroducing local government into the curriculum has been developed. The teaching unit to be developed will likely serve as a model for other communities and may ensure that future generations will be better informed, more involved, and hopefully better governed.

## Ontario Legislature Cites the Bureau's Work

Our research serves an important role in the Provincial legislature as ammunition for all three major political parties. A few recent quotes serve as examples:

### Question to The Hon. John Rhodes, Minister of Housing from Michale Breaugh, NDP Housing Critic (April 27, 1977)

"You quoted in previous speeches the Bureau of Municipal Research and I found a couple of their latest things rather interesting. The first one I want to put in, which addresses itself to the point that I just raised, was the March 1977 issue from them, and it's called **Design for Development, Where Are You?** I don't think we need to say much more than to read the title because that's the problem. Where is that Design for Development? Whatever happened to it? The other one from March 1977, these are both recent ones and they've done a lot of good work in this field, I think, is called **Disappearing Farmlands, So What?** I think again, without running into a long tirade about agricultural land, that's a very real problem.

All I'm saying is if that design for development for the Province of Ontario was in place, if those firm policies that would come out of a provincial plan were in place, municipalities would know where they were going."

### \* Mr. Bud Germa, M.P.P. (Sudbury) Second Reading of Bill 43

"In principle I think we are making a major step forward to secure the independence of the Auditor, and I think it would be good to enunciate the principle of an independent person — and I will quote from a paper produced by the Bureau of Municipal Research in June 1976: 'The importance of an independent audit of funds handled by public officials has been recognized historically as early as Aristotle's days when he described a situation in ancient Greece.' I continue to quote: 'Inasmuch as some of the magistracies handle large sums of public money, there must be another office to receive and account and subject it to audit, which must itself have no other business.' I underline that statement, 'handle no other business'.

### \* The Hon. Darcy McKeough, Treasurer of Ontario, Provincial Municipal Liaison Meeting (November 18, 1977)

"The Treasurer noted that the Bureau of Municipal Research had just published a research paper "**Changing The Planning Act: Risks and Responsibilities**" and it was well worth reading."

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