

March 26/75

\$150,000 for Victoria Hall sometime next week

The first of government grants promising to total 1.2 million dollars in aid to the Society for the Restoration of Victoria Hall will be in the possession of Cobourg town council by sometime next week.

Councillors voted unanimously Monday night to sign an agreement with the ministry of Indian affairs and northern development which will procure the first \$150,000 conditional instalment of the federal government commitment. A remainder of \$250,000 from that ministry, which is to make a total grant not to exceed \$400,000 for the restoration, will be awarded when the provincial government and the town provide "satisfactory evidence" of their contribution, to total \$800,000.

After discussing the proximately 30 minutes, conditions set forth by the council rose from committee to accept the

agreement in open council. Councillor David Purvis was overheard to say a federal government courier was spending the night at the Chateau Hotel, to deliver the signed agreement to Ottawa sometime Wednesday.

It is understood that the signed agreement must be in the hands of the ministry by Thursday of this week, before the close of the federal government's fiscal year.

Arising from council's acceptance of the federal government's provisions for the \$400,000

grant, were two resolutions passed Monday to ensure: 1, that upon receipt of the \$150,000, that money be paid into trust not to be spent until the 1.2 million dollars are received, and 2, that the Society for the Restoration of Victoria Hall be requested to make provision for up to three appointments to its board of directors. The appointments which will be made by town council will probably allow for one federal government liaison person, one provincial and one town representative.

Although the federal

government made no stipulation in its conditions for the \$150,000, that the money be held in trust, in signing, the town accepted responsibility to pay back the first portion of the grant if the restoration were not completed by January 1, 1980, or if the other two \$400,000 grants were not awarded.

"It should be noted," said Councillor Mac Lees "that the \$150,000 can be used now or later with no strings attached. But it may be in the interest of the town to wait."

Councillor Harry MacDonald said the money should be held in trust.

"It is council who must pay it back."

According to the new binding agreement, "all contributions made by Her Majesty to the Town will be in turn disbursed for such purposes." (restoration of Victoria Hall).

However, Monday evening, councillors were suggesting strong possibilities of favoring a policy which would award the interest accrued on the \$150,000 to the town rather than to the restoration of the 1860 town hall.

Both Mr. Purvis and Mayor Jack Heenan expressed strong reserve after the open council meeting, that the interest should automatically go toward the restoration.

"Why should the two or three grand from the trust go to the Society when it's the town that's liable if it has to be paid back?" Mr. Purvis was heard to say.

The remaining conditions of the agreement were not considered by council to represent any real hardships in its newly assumed responsibility toward the completion of Victoria Hall.

Council must insure the old town hall against fire for the amount of its completed worth when restored to its 1860 state, council must open Victoria Hall to public visitation for a specified number of days out of each year, beginning now, and council must restore Victoria Hall to its original condition if it is damaged by fire before January, 1, 2010. If the town does not restore the building, the federal government's \$400,000 contribution must be paid back less a small yearly sum.

The ministry of Indian affairs and northern development also reserves the right to request vouchers and accounts pertaining to the restoration work, and to make an audit to the satisfaction of the minister. It can further