



Reporter Desbarats interviews undercover man on Graham Ave.

Streets Are Chaotic on Top But Well Organized Below

By **PETER DESBARATS**
(Tribune Staff Writer)

Winnipeg's "underground movement" seems to be enjoying a good season.

Barricades appear in strange places, pavements disappear and slit trenches snake through the streets. Men descend into the bowels of the earth while traffic goes haywire above.

The "chef d'oeuvre" of the underground movement this season was, of course, Graham Ave. between Smith and Garry Sts.

No Fun Left

Early this spring workers on Graham Ave. realized they were no longer digging pavement but just a series of old patches. There was little original asphalt and almost no fun left in the game.

Recently they ripped up the whole works and are now in the process of laying down a new, concrete work surface.

Recently The Tribune discovered that the underground in Winnipeg is not a haphazard sort of movement, as many suspect, but a well-defined organization. It even has a name — the little-known Underground Structures Committee.

Superintendent of the committee is Jack Stitt, a city draughtsman who's rarely caught without a pencil in one hand and a map in the other. He's an expert in what goes on beneath the surface in Winnipeg.

Man Who Knows

Anyone who wants to do a bit of digging in the streets (and who doesn't, these days?) has to see Mr. Stitt first. He can tell them exactly what they'll find under the pavement.

For a street, to Mr. Stitt, isn't merely a stretch of asphalt waiting for the pneumatic drill. He sees it as a trench filled with thousands of water mains, steam lines, sewer pipes, telegraph lines, telephone lines, pneumatic tubes, gas lines and electric lines.

The Underground Structures Committee was formed in January, 1955. Since then Mr. Stitt and another draughtsman have worked on a complete map of all the structures beneath Winnipeg streets.

Section "A", bounded by Colony, Portage, Lombard and the river is finished and work is underway on Section "B", bounded by Portage, Balmoral, Isabel and the CPR tracks.

Back To '82

The other principal job of the committee is supplying information on subsurface structures to any company or utility wishing to dig in the streets. To obtain such information it is often necessary to go to surveyors' fieldbooks dating back as far as 1882.

This research and the number of inquiries connected with the lay-

ing of natural gas lines have kept Mr. Stitt fully occupied in recent weeks.

When large projects such as the new Post Office are planned, Mr. Stitt meets with his committee, composed of interested companies,

utilities and city officials, to make up a schedule of underground work.

It's hard to believe, but if it wasn't for Mr. Stitt the streets would be even more pitted and patched than they are now.