

# Others' opinions on Plunkett report

## A vote for Plunkett Adopt it quickly

(From the Daily Journal-Record, Oakville)  
Aside from being a positive blueprint showing the way to regional government for the Halton-Peel area, the Plunkett report issued this week is equally significant in that it ends an unfair tradition which has allowed the rural communities to feed off the plate of the neighboring urban centres.

Under the existing structure of local government it has been a case of urban units like Oakville paying the way at the county level, while the rural areas ride for free. This has resulted from the urban centre being forced by law to contribute heavily toward the county council budget, although rural representatives have pretty much held the voting power, the control.

The system is a holdover from a by-gone era, from the days of rural Ontario when provincial politicians went far out of their way to please the farmer. That the county system is outdated is made clear in the Plunkett report which notes:  
"The basic powers and responsibility of the county were set out in the Act of 1849 and in the intervening 116 years these have not been altered substantially."

The new two-region split proposed in the Halton-Peel study report is designed to put the urban centres in full charge of their own affairs, and, most importantly, of their own monies. It puts the rural areas on their own, by bringing these centres under the proposed rural county of Halton-Peel.

Basically the two-county split outlined by Plunkett knocks the bad points out of the existing county system. Going further, however, the report makes a strong case for regional government by also showing the overdue need for a sweeping renovation of the hometown government structure in Halton and Peel.

Thomas Plunkett, consultant for the Halton-Peel study, emphasized that the day of the "local community" in the sense of what it once was, no longer really exists in this area.

There can be little doubt that regions like Halton and Peel are over-governed and some form of centralized control, as proposed by Plunkett, could bring much uniformity and efficiency to future development and to the taxpayer.

The main roadblock in the way of rationalization of local government, of course has been local autonomy, with its myriad of local politicians and their pride and possession of a myriad of local authorities.

But the fact so many local-level groups and municipal bodies proposed some type of remaking of the existing structure in briefs to Plunkett is evidence that even the hometown politicians are willing to accept that reformation is in order... and overdue.

The threat that a regional government concept may pose to "local identity" is also a roadblock, although one which is more myth than fact. The Plunkett report said that the loss of the present local government structure may lead some to the conclusion that points of identification will also disappear.

Ironically, one of the very real "benefits" from a unified region could turn out to be the added protection against the danger of large parts of Halton and Peel being swallowed up by the two vast city areas on the east and west... thereby completely and totally eliminating identification. Regional setups such as the proposed urban county of Mississauga would prove a much greater stumbling block to the Metro Monster vis-a-vis what now exists.

The Plunkett report has conjured up a dazzling vision of the future of the Halton-Peel region — two large centres, one urban and the other rural. The report is an imaginative design and shows thoughtful work on the part of Thomas Plunkett as he eliminates some of the incompatibility and inequity of today's structure by dividing the region rural and urban. The Halton-Peel study includes its share of controversial proposals. But as a general pattern for future government the report is admirable.

## Area is too big

From the editorial page column, "Random Thoughts, by Benjamin B. Buckboard," in The Burlington Gazette.  
Well Monsieur Plunkett has "dood" it. He came out with a plan that did not satisfy everyone. He made the great mistake of not asking 3 per cent of the people to be on his team.

His report as finally presented last week had many things in its favor. The idea of splitting the urban area away from the rural northern parts of the Counties had a lot of merit. The idea of only one plateau of government is very sound. You have heard old Ben talk of the cost of government before, so maybe there is hope yet. Even Honest John may retire, but don't hold your breath.

However, Ben believes the total area involved in Mrs. Plunkett's report is too great. Perhaps, Toronto Township, by the water, and the lower part of both Oakville and Burlington would be sufficient. They have a lot in common. Overall Ben is satisfied with the report's basic analysis of this general area and the problems facing the rapid future growth.

Ben does not agree with Mayor Berryman and Mayor Copps that Burlington's future is directly involved with the City of Hamilton.

Can you just imagine the pandemonium in this area if negotiations proceeded on a regional basis like those of LaSalle Park and the Sewage Treatment Plant of the Burlington Beach? You will recall that the City of Hamilton appealed to the OMB against Burlington building this needed plant. The City of Hamilton has never given an inch in negotiation concerning LaSalle Park, and it just seems to sit there like a big white elephant.

## Study and hospitals

(From the Daily Journal-Record, Oakville)  
The Halton-Peel regional government report is far-reaching and wide-ranging in its proposals. Not overlooked is the problem of operating the community hospitals located within the two-county area.

(From The Beaver, Oakville)  
The Peel-Halton Local Government Review conducted by special commissioner Thomas J. Plunkett may endanger Oakville's autonomy, but will certainly help to attain our identity in the light of being swallowed up by the Metro-monster.

And if Mr. Plunkett's recommendations are followed up it is a certainty that we've got the monster by the tail. It must be realized that regional government is our only salvation in keeping up with progress.

The consolidation of municipal forces in one county government does not only cut expenses on the local level, but more important, it is the only way of establishing co-ordination. It cuts out political hanky panky, it ensures a higher calibre of administrative employees. It does away with many of the boards and commissions and committees, which is one way of cutting down on a lot of red tape.

The consolidation as it applies to the Lakeshore communities is even more important because each of these municipalities suffers from the same setbacks. By co-ordination of a movement to build up a progressive county system the common problems will become one, and will be dealt with through one administrative body.

Though the Plunkett recommendations are far from being a reality and though they will be tossed around on the municipal and provincial levels for some time, they are without doubt, a step in the right direction.

Neither is there any doubt that at least part, if not in its entirety, the Plunkett report should be adopted as soon as possible.

## What's all the hurry?

(From The Bolton Enterprise)  
The report by Thomas J. Plunkett, the consultant retained by the Ontario government recommending the dissolution of boundaries in Peel and Halton counties, intimates that municipal administration of our changing region.

We believe that all levels of government need over-hauling, starting at the Federal and Provincial end, ending with the county. We have always thought our municipal councils gave us the best return for our tax dollar. So we are not prepared to subscribe to change for the sake of change until the whole matter is more fully understood.

It is understandable that officials in Peel and Halton are objecting to the proposed amalgamation. Some are passing out judgment showing immaturity and a lack of careful study of the plan.

The Hon. Wilfred Spooner of the Ontario government who took the wrappers off Plunkett's Report, placed a limit of Dec. 31, 1966, as the terminating date to register objections to the proposals. We suggest this is not enough time for the people of Peel and Halton to evaluate such a scheme. Further it is the public who should make such a far-reaching decision, not the elected officials. Yes, the last word should come from the people.

A number of public meetings should be called and the reasons for abandoning our municipal system and boundaries advanced and carefully discussed. In fact the main weakness to the report is we haven't heard enough from Mr. Plunkett. It would be appropriate to have him speak in defence of his plan at the "grass roots level". The already harassed taxpayer will want to know what this thing is going to do to his tax-bill?

## Must consider changes

(from the Canadian Champion, Milton)  
Release of the Peel-Halton local government review prepared by Thomas Plunkett has been received in municipal circles with varying degrees of acceptance and rejection. There is little doubt, however, that it announced a whistling wind of change in local government.

There have been snide remarks about the report and there have been glowing acceptances but each municipality, represented by its council, has a distinct and clear-cut responsibility to think constructively and deeply to achieve from these preliminary proposals a sound and acceptable form of local government.

We have no difficulty in supporting the abolition of all the local boards and seeing their responsibilities transferred back to local councils. The current group of boards and commissions can certainly carry on a valuable work, but there are constant areas of friction. Then too, the efficient management of staff would be better served by a consolidation of responsibility rather than continuing the fragmentation that presently exists.

There is a degree of concern in our mind for the democracy of the whole structure. The Mayor would have limited veto which gives a great deal of power. The representation is cut drastically from what we presently have — nine man council to a three man local service commission. The public school board of six members would go, as would the seven member high school board, to be replaced by three members whose responsibilities would cover north Halton and Peel. Involvement of the citizens reduced to this extent, can drastically effect citizen interest.

It does not seem to us the merit of the east-west split has been adequately proven in opposition to a north-south split of the area. Retention of the north-south boundary between present Halton and Peel would create two better balanced municipalities with developed and undeveloped land; but then we didn't get \$65,000 for our opinion.

Milton Council wisely chose not to discuss the Plunkett Report until all members had read it. Then they plan to begin a review of the proposals in preparation for compiling a brief to the province. Hopefully the sessions will not be clouded by narrow-mindedness and caustic comments, but will seek with vision and depth to prepare for the inevitable changes.

## A fact to face... now

(From the Bramalea Guardian)  
The Plunkett Report's recommendations were as inevitable as Monday morning. No one particularly looked forward to them, but everyone knew they were coming.

And, in the cold, clear light of a Monday morning, it is hard to fault the reasoning which would create one huge Urban County of Mississauga, stretching from Toronto to Hamilton, and a Rural County of Peel-Halton, embracing the northern portions of Halton and Peel, each with a single administration.

There are many details over which to niggle and negotiate, and one major question which requires an immediate answer: is full amalgamation, which the report recommends, the logical first step or the logical second step, which should follow creation of two Metro-type administrations to work out the details? Which is better: an end to local administration with one brutal blow, or a gradual transition?

The experience of our neighbor to the east must have been in Mr. Plunkett's mind when he reached his own decision. And, with great reluctance, we have to agree with his conclusion.

His super-counties and their super-councils may not be the ultimate answers but total amalgamation is as inevitable here as it is in Metropolitan Toronto. And for all the furors total amalgamation will stir now, we stand at least to be spared much of the last-ditch, bitter infighting of Toronto's local municipalities, dying a slow and agonizing death by degrees.

All in all, Mr. Plunkett deserves congratulations for a report which, while it will kindle many a bonfire, was as totally objective as only an outsider's report could possibly have been. As Robert Burns noted long ago, we do not see ourselves as others see us.

### Let's Play Bridge

by Bill Coals

It's always nice to make a grand slam, especially if you have bid it. It's even nicer to make the opponents throw away tricks in order to make your contract. This was a hand played by my wife and myself this summer. It contains several interesting points.

Dealer — South. Both sides vulnerable.

North: S-A Q 10 9, H-A 9, D-A 4 3, C-A Q 4 2

West: S-7, H-J 7 6 3, D-Q 8 7, C-J 8 5 3

East: S-5 3, H-K Q 5 4 2, D-J 9 6, C-10 7 6

South: S-K J 8 6 4 2, H-10 8, D-K 10 5 2, C-K

The bidding: South 1S, West Pass, North 1C, East Pass, South 1S, West Pass, North 4S, East Pass, South 4N, West Pass, North 5C, East Pass, South 7S, All Pass.

North's bid of four spades shows support for spades and a hand worth at least 20 points. In order to raise South's one spade to four, it must be strong since South may have as little as six points.

In answer to the Blackwood bid of four no trump, North bids five clubs. To South, this shows none or four aces. Since South has no aces and since North must have at least 20 points, this must show all the aces.

The position just before South leads the last trump is as follows:

S — H — D A 4 3 C —

S — H — D 9 8 7 C —

S — H — D — C —

S — 2 H — 10 D — K 10 C —

When the spade deuce is led, it's up to West to play. West must keep the club, hence a diamond is discarded. Declarer discards the club four from dummy and now it's up to East to decide if East discards a diamond, then dummy is good. If he discards a heart, then South's heart 10 is good. A grand slam bid is made.

Last week's winners were: first, Cam Sinclair and Tom Warner; second, Betty Ashley and Penny Bristow; third, Duke Wilson and Mike Latusza.

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