

COLIN BEST: CHANGES DON'T REDUCE THE NUMBER OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

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sentative Mike Cluett says that it's not surprising that the Province is looking at reducing the size of government, but what is shocking to people is the timing of the move, which was made on the closing day for nominations in the municipal election.

"I don't disagree with having smaller councils," he said, explaining that while he voted to reduce the number of seats in Milton council, he pushed for more regional representation for Milton.

"Milton continues to grow," said Cluett, noting that Halton Region is expanding its number of regional councillors from 21 seats to 24. If Ford's plans for Toronto city council pass, Halton Region, with a population of just under 600,000 would have one less

elected official than the city of Toronto, which has 2.8 million residents.

After Ford's announcement Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Steve Clark said that the province would be undertaking a complete review of municipal government in Ontario, starting with the Association of Municipalities Ontario (AMO) conference that runs from Aug. 19-22.

"In Halton and Durham we've been electing the chairs for years," said Milton councillor and Regional representative Colin Best. "If you're in favour of democracy why would you want people appointed?"

He says that it doesn't even reduce the number of government officials.

"For regional chairs, it's going backwards not forwards," he said.

Ted Arnott, Wellington-Halton Hills MPP, and new-

ly appointed speaker of the house said that he expects more information to come on Monday.

"In order to retain the confidence of both government and Opposition MPPs, the Speaker of the Legislature must be fair and impartial while presiding over question period and debates in the House," he said.

"I will seek to ensure that the minister of municipal affairs is aware of the ideas and concerns of the people of Wellington-Halton Hills on this important issue, and that our riding's views are considered by the government."

Arnott says he is unsure of why some municipalities are affected by the changes, while others like Halton are not mentioned.

"I am sure we'll hear more next week when the house resumes," he said.

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