

EDITORIAL

With Hartley Coles



Border wars begin

Dave Broadfoot, raconteur and wit, asks Ontarians how we like living in a province where a pizza can arrive faster than an ambulance. Now it seems borders can change even faster.

The new fathers of confederation at Queen's Park have decided they will implement the David Crombie panel report on the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), making a mega-city out of the five separate cities which made up Metro Toronto. However, caution has ruled on what to do with what is called the outlying regions such as Halton, Peel, Durham and York.

Municipal Affairs Minister Al Leach has said the legislation will not force the amalgamation of municipalities within the regions as was suggested at one point. "I feel quite strongly that each region is unique in its own right and they're all at different periods of growth and development," Mr. Leach is report-ed to have said.

Instead he intends to appoint a GTA Commissioner to study the best forms of government to suit each region outside of the mega-city, where in this opinion, borders were always blurred anyway.

By the time this issue hits the streets, that commissioner should be appointed and the fate of Acton and Halton Hills may well be on the way to being decided. The minister has said he will also set up a Greater Toronto Services Board to be made up of elected councillors from the mega-city and from GTA regional municipalities.

Councils would appoint their own representatives to the board, based on representation by population. Which, of course, means the representation from Halton Hills will be insignificant, a new voice crying out of the wilderness. Members of the board will choose a chair from amongst themselves.

Although the government has estimated these "reforms" will save \$850 million over three years in the mega-city, there are no estimates of how much can be saved by fiddling with the present structure in Halton Region and the other regions. Hazel McCallion, the fiery mayor of Mississauga, suggests her fiefdom is the perfect little kingdom and there's little room for improvement by politicians who are fighting with just about every public sector in the province.

Much of the present changes fly in the face of the recommendations from the Crombie panel, which said if they didn't drag the reluctant regions into the plan it would continue to make Toronto the dumping ground for many social problems, not unlike cities in the United States. The charge that these changes would destroy neighbourhoods and make local governments less accessible were pooh-poohed. David Crombie says places such as Don Mills, Port Credit, etc. have preserved their identities despite being amalgamated into larger municipalities, a half truth, of course.

The experience in Acton of being merged with two other municipalities certainly robbed us of some of our identity and was no cheaper. In fact, we lost our own police, the seven members of local council and all the other local boards that kept our hand on the tiller. So here we go again. We thought that 1973 was a time of change. We may well end up with more.

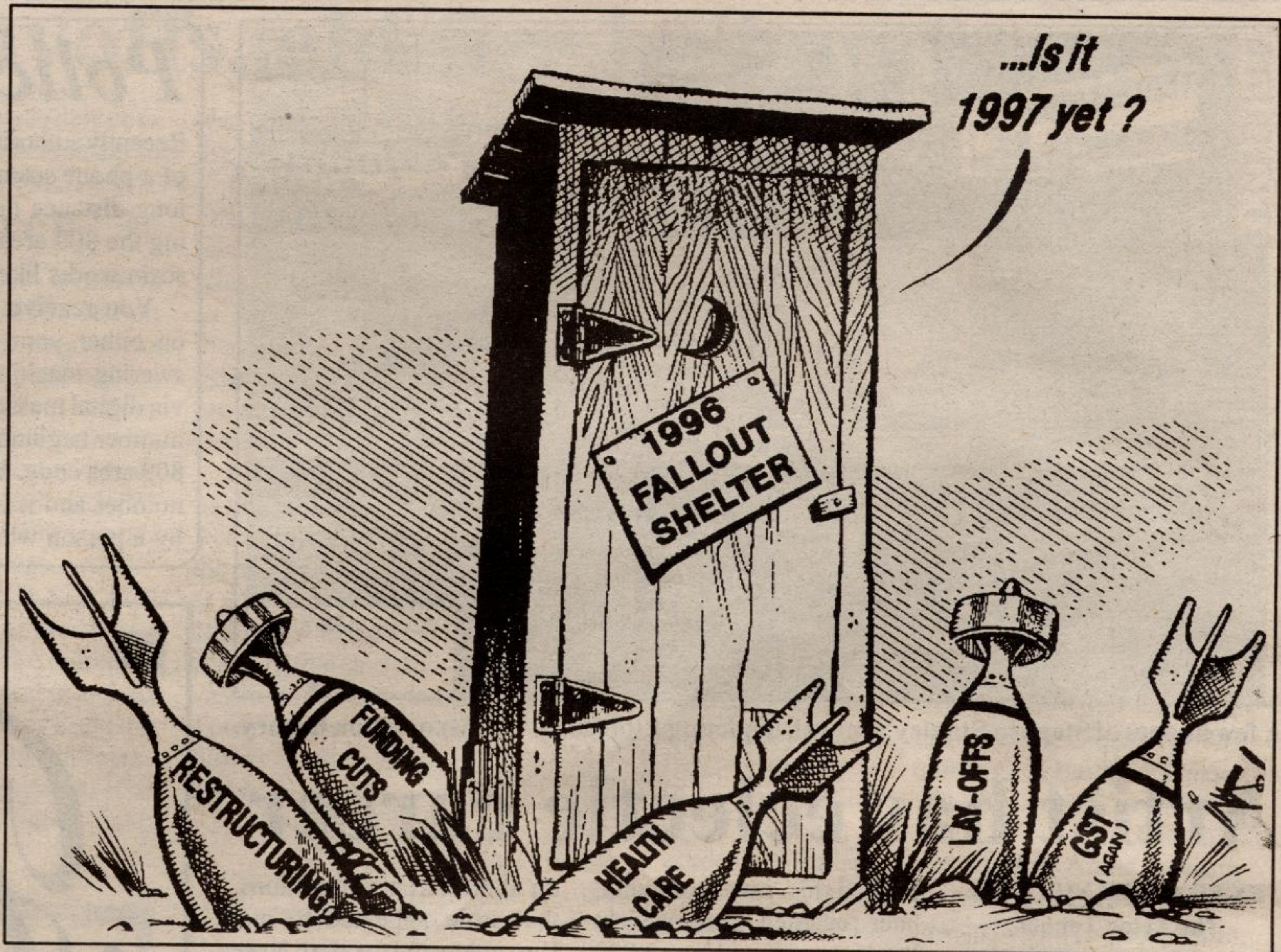
Is bigger better? Certainly for some who live in those faceless rows and rows of subdivision homes in the cities. Many of them long ago lost their neighborhoods. Politically? Too much power into too few hands. The further we streamline politically, gutting the power of local councils, the further we stray from democratic principles. Politicians who never stepped north of Hwy. 401 would soon be deciding what would happen in North Halton.

The Crombie panel has recommended that an "urban" zone be created on which to focus development and contain sprawl while rural areas, supposedly here, would be prohibited from permitting large developments. Just what we need in this neck of the woods for business and commerce - fewer fish in the Black Creek theories.

No, we are not against change if it is for the better. Let's hope the final solution contains more common sense than some of the proposals we've heard so far.

Same time last year ...

Minor hockey officials begin a no tolerance attitude towards rowdy spectators at Midget Sabre hockey games ... The olde Hide House, Wetherby's, Freezer Frenzy and Country Reflections report increased Christmas sales from the previous year ... Norm Elliott is named chair of the arena building committee.



Your LETTERS

BIA 'brightens' the downtown core

Editor's note: The following letter to Dan Dolliver, co-chair of Acton's BIA, was submitted to The Acton Tanner for publication.

Dear Mr. Dolliver,

On behalf of the seniors of Acton, our committee would like to thank the BIA for the attractive

downtown decorations.

They certainly help to brighten up out town. The merchants, with their brightly lit up windows and decorations, have added to the festive season as well.

The new street signs are certainly an added attraction to town as well.

We all know "It's worth the drive to Acton," and now it is worth the drive in Acton as well. The decorations and the BIA's commitment to the town all help to make us home town proud.

Thanks again for your efforts to brighten up Acton.

*Helen Dubeau, Chair
Seniors Planning and Education
Committee, ASSIC*

Thank you, Acton!

To the Editor,

Once again this Christmas season, the residents of the community of Acton and surrounding areas have come through with their donations towards our Christmas Hamper Program. Your love, concern and goodwill has been manifested through financial donations as well as food,

toys and clothing. Many homes will be brightened and many hearts lightened because of you.

I thank you on behalf of The Salvation Army in Acton, together with the Lakeside Chapter of the IODE, Acton Rotary and St. Vincent de Paul. Happy holidays and happy new year. God Bless.

*Larry Jennings, Captain
Corps Officer*



Write a letter to the Editor!

Deadline is Monday at noon.

Please sign your letter and include your address as well as a daytime phone number in case we have to reach you.

Voice out on what issues are affecting you!

THE ACTON Tanner

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