

REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

as proposed by the Hon. Darcy McKeough



DARCY McKEOUGH, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, delivers his "tentative proposal" for the regionalization of Peel and Halton.

Following is the complete text of the Hon. W. Darcy McKeough's address to the 200 municipal officials at Queen's Park last Wednesday afternoon.

It is with a great deal of pleasure that I meet with you today to set in motion a process of negotiation and discussion that will result in a system of regional government for the Peel-Halton area. What I am about to say will be a tentative proposal for the reorganization of your local government. I am suggesting that we can employ this proposal as a basis for future negotiations. Perhaps within twelve months, agreement can be obtained on a complete system.

PEEL-HALTON LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW COMMISSION

To date, consideration has been given to the Report of the Peel-Halton Local Government Review Commission, and to the submissions prepared by the municipalities in connection with this study. Talks have been held with representatives of the County of Peel and with several of the municipalities in Halton.

I am satisfied that the Local Government Review Commission, established in July of 1965, was a device exceptionally well-suited to the purpose of involving local residents in the subject of regional government.

The Report of this Commission has performed the essential function of clarifying for us the local opinion of what form of government is most suited to the region. Area residents have conveyed to my Department a virtually unanimous rejection of the Report's recommendation that the region be divided into a rural and urban district.

DESIGN FOR DEVELOPMENT—PHASE TWO

Much work has been brought forward at the provincial level that has been most helpful in the establishment of general criteria for the design and implementation of new forms of local government throughout the Province. We have received the reports of The Select Committee on The Municipal Act and Related Acts, The Ontario Committee on Taxation (The Smith Committee) and The Select Committee Report of the Legislature on the Smith Committee Report.

Much of what we have determined to employ from these studies



TOWN OFFICIALS attending included Clerk J. McGeachie, Councillor Charles Fay, Deputy-Reeve Ron Harris and, standing—Councillor Colin Smillie and Reeve Austan Ledwith.

is now compiled in the publication of "Design for Development—Phase Two". This publication combines my statement on regional government with that of the Prime Minister's and represents a commitment to redesign the institutions of local government in the province. This will be done on the basis of urban-centred regions that will cover both urban and rural areas.

THE ONTARIO COMMITTEE ON TAXATION

Many of the reasons why this policy must be viewed as imperative for the sound development of this Province have been well documented in the Report of The Ontario Committee on Taxation.

It was pointed out in that Report that the inadequate size of most municipal units has resulted in a chaotic system of provincial grants to local government that cannot adequately compensate for inherent financial weaknesses. In addition, the conflicting purposes and goals of numerous competing jurisdictions can best be rationalized by strengthening the priority setting function of municipal budgets through the implementation of large multi-purpose units of regional government.

The Committee observed that "... we could not hope to fulfill our mandate of producing a 'tax and revenue system that is simple, clear, equitable, efficient, adequate and as conducive to the sound growth of the Province as can be devised' without recommending changes in the existing structure of local government".

MTARTS

In the review of The Metropolitan Toronto and Region Transportation Study, and through daily contact with municipal planning officials, my Department has become convinced of the necessity of regional government to the formulation of comprehensive land-use plans and development proposals. The MTARTS Report observes that "... regional plans require the full participation of both local and provincial governments and apparently the present situation has not produced the necessary interest and participation. Only where there is a local administrative unit having authority over a large area and ample resources can a plan which might be called regional be prepared."

The publication of these reports and their unanimous support for the principle of regional government has led to a dramatic rise in public concern for local reform in Ontario. Residents of Ontario are no longer prepared to tolerate the lack of co-ordination in the provision of regional services and the lack of direction in the growth of the regional community. This situation is perpetuated by the existence of numerous, fragmented and overlapping municipal and special purpose jurisdictions.

A municipal structure should instead be firmly rooted in the democratic concept of representation by population. It should be of adequate size to competently administer area-wide functions. To retain the interest and participation of residents, it is essential that their system of municipal government be allocated the direct responsibility for a large number of important functions.

THE CRITERIA FOR REFORM

Accordingly, we have reviewed the reports of these several commissions on the finances, structure and organization of local government and from these we have accepted eight criteria for the design and implementation of regional government in the Province. These criteria have been published in "Design for Development—Phase Two".

With these criteria in mind and in the light of the situation existing between Metropolitan Toronto and The City of Hamilton, I am proposing the combination of parts or all of the County of Halton with the County of Peel to create a system of regional government for this area.

1. COMMUNITY IDENTITY

The first criterion requires that a region must exhibit a sense of community identity. There are several accepted indicators of the pattern of community interest such as geography, economics and sociological characteristics. In some areas of a region it is possible that all such indices will not be operating in the same direction. For example, a community may be distinctly tied to one region by reason of a geographic characteristic such as the pattern of natural drainage. At the same time, this community may also be closely

related to a different area in terms of its economic orientation. Moreover, some particular indices may be changing with time, and the future relationship of a community with a region cannot be determined with true precision.

We believe that the studies we have reviewed to date indicate that a true sense of community does exist in the Peel-Halton area. Of course, many elements of diversity are evident also, but we are convinced that these can be suitably incorporated into our system of large urban-centred regions. We note that similar patterns of land utilization tend to occur in related areas of both existing counties and that many of the same pressures of urbanization extend across the entire region.

I would like to be more specific on this topic. We have designated for consideration today an area that is marked by several distinct geographic characteristics. From the eastern edge of the township to the Etobicoke Creek, the terrain is dominated by an almost flat, gently sloping plain. At its greatest extent, this feature



LAUGHING AND CLAPPING, Esquesing councillors and clerk Delmar French actually found little to cheer about when Darcy McKeough delivered his Halton-Peel regional government merger ideas. From left are Reeve George Currie, clerk French, Deputy-Reeve Tom Hill, and Councillors Ken Marshall and Russell Miller.

extends as far north as the Village of Bolton. As a result, on the western and northern boundaries of the region, it is possible to approximate the administrative area with the existing pattern of natural drainage.

The first map that is attached to the copies of this statement indicates by a heavy line the approximate boundaries of the region's watersheds. Copies will be made available at the end of today's meeting. General adherence to patterns of natural drainage will be a benefit to the planning and administration of major sewer projects and will assist in the designation of areas for future residential and recreational development.

In the Peel-Halton region, I wish to point out the preponderance of east-west arterial traffic routes. These provide important links between the various communities in the region, as well as between this region and the major urban concentrations on its eastern and western borders. Traffic studies carried out for municipalities of the area and projections made in the Metropolitan Toronto Area and Region Transportation Study suggest an important reliance on such external links for purposes of employment. But these studies reveal as well that this reliance may be diminishing.

The growth of specific kinds of employment opportunities in and Halton will add impetus to an already high rate of urban growth. Also we anticipate that the character of residential development in the area will become much more diversified. The subsequent demand for a variety of recreational and social facilities in the region makes

it imperative that the regional administration direct the planning of these facilities on an adequate basis and with financial resources to match its need.

2. BALANCE OF INTERESTS

Our second criterion demands that a region should have a balance of interests so that no one group can be completely dominant. The application of this criterion has played a very large role in suggesting that Peel and Halton be united in a single region.

In the County of Peel for example, the rapid rate at which urbanization has proceeded in the southern municipalities has led to a preponderance of urban-oriented interests in that county. At present, the administration of the area labours under a difficult scheme of multiple voting in County Council. We must move more closely to the democratic concept of representation by population.

To do this, urban centres will be combined with a sufficiently large rural area to balance their separate concerns. By uniting Peel and Halton, the voice of the rural and developing area of the region

is strengthened vis-a-vis the major urban communities.

3. ADEQUATE FINANCIAL BASE

We have accepted a third criterion which is: There must be a financial base adequate to carry out regional programs at a satisfactory level. We feel certain that the area which will be proposed today will suit this criterion admirably and will do much to equate the financial capacity of lower-tier municipalities with the obligations they face for providing services.

4. SIZE

The fourth criterion which shall be adhered to in a program of regional administration for the Province, as for the Peel-Halton area, is: The Region should be large enough so that local responsibility can be performed efficiently by taking advantage of economies of scale. On a tentative basis, the size of the unit to be advanced today approximates 900 square miles. This is considerably larger than Metropolitan Toronto, but we point out that The Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton, at 1,100 square miles, still does not surpass an optimum size for the circumstances of that region.

The recent signing of an \$88 million agreement for the South Peel Sewage System is one example of the scope of projects that can be attempted at the regional level. It is our hope that under a regional multi-purpose administration, such projects can be planned and implemented with a much improved knowledge of the region's future pattern and extent of development, and of the implications of such major capital programs. It is imperative for the orderly economic growth of the province that all such major projects in future be integrated within the context of a system of regional plans to be drafted and implemented at the regional level in conjunction with the provincial planning agency.

5. INTER-REGIONAL CO-OPERATION

The fifth criterion for the design of regional government requires that regional boundaries should facilitate maximum inter-regional co-operation. It is my opinion that co-operation will be more readily attained if regional governments are of approximately equal size. I therefore visualize one strong region between Hamilton and Toronto.

I have attempted to touch upon some of the complexities that make a decision so difficult in the case of Burlington. We are, of course, eagerly awaiting the findings of The Hamilton-Burlington-Wentworth Local Government Review Commission before making a final proposal. This report is expected during 1969 and in a few months thereafter the position of Burlington is certain to be clearly defined. In this context however, I must stress that we do not eagerly anticipate the day when the Toronto and Hamilton Regions meet in the vicinity of the Credit River or Oakville Creek. We feel instead that the encouragement of local access and participation in the democratic process of government warrants the creation of a strong unit of regional government between Hamilton and Toronto. We will indicate for purposes of discussion how the Town of Burlington would fit into this region.

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Nassagaweya's representatives react strongly to proposal

Reaction to Municipal Affairs Minister Darcy McKeough's proposal for Halton and Peel Counties wasn't strong from the urban areas but rural representatives at the meeting in Queen's Park were bitter at some of the suggestions.

Mr. McKeough invited enquiries from the 200 councillors and administrators after he had finished outlining the regional government proposal.

Nassagaweya reeve Bill Hoey charged the government's intention was to "disenfranchise the whole of rural Ontario." He said the Department of Education has already done it. Nassagaweya has contributed to every town in the area for years and now the government sought to further disenfranchise the rural areas by growth patterns. The township reeve, his voice strong and clear, said it was "absolutely wrong" to base the regional government on "rep by pop." With one stroke of the pen they can disenfranchise hundreds of square miles where families are settled.

"Oakville, Burlington and Mississauga at least had the decency to have one member from the rural areas," Mr. Hoey stated. "We haven't been successful with the Department of Education and I don't think we'll be successful with you either."

The Minister side stepped open battle with Mr. Hoey. "I don't believe we are disenfranchising anyone," he replied. He said one purpose of the regional government plan was to "try and bring rural and urban people together."

Deputy-reeve Anne MacArthur of Nassagaweya was equally upset by Mr. McKeough's presentation. After he handed officials food for thought and told them to "chew hard" on it for the next 12 months, it wasn't long before she was on her feet asking why the minister repeatedly emphasized the democratic process when it was obvious the proposal was going to be put through no matter what the township wanted.

The minister's plan to tie over two-thirds of the township in with a Milton-based area and the possibility of losing the top half of the township to the Guelph area were equally galling to township representatives. Mr. McKeough admitted the matter had not been discussed with Wellington County representatives.

The minister repeatedly emphasized the plan was a "tentative proposal" that can be varied to accommodate individual problems. He said no municipality would be able to exercise veto power over the proposed legislation, however. Nassagaweya councillor Art

Gibson told Mr. McKeough he would like to see someone from the township on the committee discussing the proposal with Wellington county for taking in the top half of the township.

Mr. McKeough replied the committee would have to look at the general things in an agreement.

Caledon township representatives were also seeing red after the minister's proposals were given. They agreed the rural areas were sparsely settled and unable to afford Children's Aid Society aid or Health Unit benefits without participating with the more affluent and heavily populated urban municipalities. However, they argued the rural areas should get representation on regional councils.

One questioner was more emphatic at the proposal to disband all present municipal councils.

"Looks like you're firing all the volunteer help and the paid help is going to take over."

M.P.P. George Kerr, visibly upset at the reaction of Nassagaweya voters to the minister's proposal, told the press after the meeting that he intends to meet Mr. McKeough to discuss keeping the northern portion of Nassagaweya in the Peel-Halton region.



NASSAGAWEYA DELEGATION, all frowning at the Minister's plan to chop their township apart, included Councillors James Watson and Gordon Agnew, Deputy-Reeve Mrs. Anne MacArthur and Councillor Art Gibson.



DARCY LIGHTS UP and discusses his report with Milton Mayor Brian Best. The Minister's plan would lump most of Nassagaweya, part of Esquesing and part of Oakville with Milton in a regional unit with a 12,500 population. —(Staff Photos)

Urban reps resigned

Acton, Milton mayors ask questions some facets of tentative proposal

Urban representatives from Halton and Peel seemed resigned to the "impunity of a single government" for the two counties" but there were many objections and questions following Municipal Affairs Minister Darcy McKeough's outline of the region Wednesday at Queen's Park.

Milton mayor Brian Best asked the minister if he was going to set up guide lines for salaries under the new system of government because educational salaries were causing concern.

The minister replied the government would like to turn some control from Queen's Park to the region and setting salaries "runs contrary to principles."

"Unless some are established," the Milton mayor shot back, "they might face bankruptcy."

Mayor Best also disagreed with the rules for picking a seven man committee to negotiate the two tier regional government proposal. The committee will be composed of three members from each county and one from Orangeville. The mayor thought one person from each municipality should be on the committee. "It depends where a man comes from what his bias will be," he asserted.

Acton mayor Les Doby,

acknowledging a democratic process, said some development in the fringe areas was giving Acton some concern. He also asked if a recent brief had not shown Guelph was not compatible with the Kitchener-Waterloo area? Was the proposal considered in the light of Guelph's brief?

"The tenor of Guelph's brief was to preserve the status quo", the minister replied, "so we have not discussed it with them so far."

Acton's always been like a barnacle on a whale's belly," Mr. Doby described the location of the town on the northern fringe of Halton. Acton has always been close to the Guelph area and far removed from influence by places like Mississauga and southern communities.

"People in Acton are oriented towards Guelph," he asserted, "especially with hospitals." He asked if the proposals for Acton were static and not subject to change.

The minister said the Guelph brief was not considered in relation to the proposal and it was quite possible changes in the Acton recommendations could be made.

Mississauga mayor Robert Speck suggested the regional

proposal could possibly work better if "two bites rather than one" came first and then amalgamate in five years. Peel, he felt, was more ready for regional government than Halton, an opinion held widely.

Will election boundaries change? "No" said the minister. One board of education? No,—two!

Will the provincial government veto any land annexation plans? Yes! Except when it was only an acre or so!

Mayor "Steamer" Emmerson of Georgetown, in reply to a question was told the proposal conformed to the M.T.A.R.T.S. study.

Oakville mayor McLean Anderson said his municipality was willing to work with anyone on friendly terms. Milton councillors laughed. The Oakville mayor said he opposed indirect election of members of the regional council instead of by appointments from each of the lower tier regional councils.

The minister said this was still negotiable. "We're wide open on this," he declared.

When will the study be implemented? In January, 1971, the minister hoped.