

Meen's talk sketches regional plan

Text of the comments of A.K. Meen, Parliamentary Assistant to the Treasurer of Ontario in outlining the proposed Regional Government for Halton County, as delivered in Hamilton Tuesday evening.

To many of you, our proposal for Halton will sound familiar, since a lot of the ideas in it came from you. Among these we acknowledge particularly the suggestions in the briefs we received from many of the municipalities of Halton County, and from the County itself.

We are in complete agreement with the fundamental point made in the Halton County brief; we too believe that the best form of government in Halton would be a two-tiered municipality embracing all of Halton County except the small part of eastern Oakville, as mentioned in our Peel proposal.

However, we propose two departures. The first is the addition of the village of Waterdown and the township of East Flamborough, which are now in Wentworth County. The second has to do with the number of municipalities within the region.

The community of interest shared by Waterdown and the urban part of East Flamborough with the Town of Burlington has been recognized for some time. Even if we had found it desirable to include Burlington with Hamilton and Wentworth—as the Steele Report recommended—we would still have proposed joining Waterdown and East Flamborough to Burlington.

In our opinion, this amalgamation is essential if only because Waterdown is currently receiving water from the Aldershot sector of Burlington, and this service needs to be extended.

To recap briefly then: The regional municipality of Halton would cover virtually all of Halton County plus the Village of Waterdown and the Township of East Flamborough, except for a very small part of Oakville.

How many area municipalities would be appropriate for Halton? This brings us to our second departure from the Halton brief.

Like their counterparts in Peel, representatives of Halton County took the commendable step of recommending a reduction in the number of municipalities. They wanted their Regional Government unit to consist of just three area municipalities.

Milton, however, took the view that it should form a fourth municipality.

Having considered both sides of the question very carefully, we are inclined to see considerable merit in Milton's point of view. We agree that there is a separate, identifiable community of interest centred upon Milton and stretching across the middle of Halton County. We see it as having a character and prospects for development similar to those of the proposed area municipality of central Peel. Across this wide mid-section of Halton there is, in our view, a community whose residents do not look to the northern part of the county for their community services, but to Milton.

For this reason, we subscribe to the idea of having four area municipalities in Halton. Municipalities we refer to, for discussion purposes, as Burlington, Oakville, Central Halton and North Halton.

However, our proposal differs somewhat in detail from what was proposed locally. Rather than following the boundary suggested by Milton, we would rather see a boundary line farther south so as to include the growth centres of North Oakville and North Burlington—both of which are part of the development plans for the Toronto-Centred region.

There is, in our view, a sound rationale for this suggestion. Within the next few months, the Government of Ontario will be announcing the routes of the parkway corridors intended to separate those growth centres from their southern counterparts. When that announcement is made, the final location of the southern boundary of central Halton can be adjusted to coincide with the parkway corridor.

For purposes of this proposal, we have drawn a line on the map to represent this boundary. But I caution you very strongly against trying to infer from this line what lands will actually be involved in the parkway. This line, to be announced some months from now, could vary one way or the other, according to the decision on the parkway belt.

Now, for a moment, let us look at the four proposed area municipalities, one by one:

This would be the Burlington area municipality. It would consist of the major part of the present town of Burlington, the township of East Flamborough and the Village of Waterdown. From the present town of Burlington we would remove an L-shaped strip running across the northern part of Burlington, north of Kildee and down the east side to a point near Zimmerman. This strip would become part of Central Halton.

The area municipality of Oakville would have an eastern boundary with Mississauga, as I described earlier. The western boundary with Burlington would remain unchanged. The northern boundary of Oakville would be moved considerably southward, as I mentioned. The object would be to make sure that all of the proposed North Oakville community—referred to in the Toronto-Centred Region concept Plan—would be included in Central Halton, as you will see in a moment. Otherwise, North Oakville would be split in two—a situation which I think you will agree would be most unsatisfactory.

The southern boundary of Central Halton will be evident to you by now, from the descriptions I have given of Burlington and Oakville. For the northern boundary of Central Halton we propose to draw a line starting in the western boundary of Nassagaweya Township and proceeding eastward on the line between lots 10 and 11 to point east of Highway 25. From here the boundary would jog southward, then eastward to the boundary of Chinguacousy Township.

We believe that this enlargement of Milton is well justified by the patterns of community interest I mentioned a few moments ago. I should emphasize too that the government intends to confine major urban growth in the future to zone 1 of the Toronto-Centred Region, which covers only the southern section and part of the central area. The rest of the central area and all of the northern area are in zone 2.

The fourth municipality, North Halton, would be made up of Acton, Georgetown and the northern two thirds of Nassagaweya and Esquesing Townships.

For Halton we propose a regional council of twenty-three representatives including the chairman.

Burlington would seat nine members on the regional council; Oakville would have six; Central Halton would have three; and North Halton would have four.

This arrangement would achieve a balance in the voting around the council table, with no one municipality dominating the rest.

At the same time it would assign voting power in close proportion to the population, since Burlington would have the largest population of the four, and Central Halton the smallest.

As I am sure you have noticed by now, our proposals for Peel and Halton are fundamentally the same. In both cases we are recommending establishment of two-tier governments. Each region would embrace only a few area municipalities—

PROPOSED HALTON REGION

MUNICIPAL STATISTICS

MUNICIPALITY	ESTIMATED POPULATION		REPRESENTATION ON REGIONAL COUNCIL		POPULATION PER REP.	ESTIMATED EQUALIZED ASSESSMENT		ESTIMATED SQUARE MILES	
	#	%	#	%		\$,000	%	#	%
Burlington	93,000	47.0	9	39.1	10,333	855,095	43.0	108	26.6
Oakville	59,000	29.8	6	26.1	9,833	720,760	36.2	67	16.6
Central Halton	14,500	7.3	3	13.0	4,833	155,046	7.8	92	22.8
North Halton	31,500	15.9	4	17.4	7,875	258,716	13.0	138	34.0
TOTALS	198,000		23			1,989,617		405	

POPULATION STATISTICS: 1971

EQUALIZED ASSESSMENT FIGURES: 1972

three in one case and four in the other. Each of these area municipalities would be constituted according to present communities of interest and to the best projections available of future growth.

Because of these basic similarities between the two proposed regions, it seems reasonable at this point to raise certain questions and deal with recommendations applying to both Peel and Halton.

As you know, the indirect method of election involves having the voters choose a council for each area municipality. Then, by one means or another, some members of these area councils are chosen to serve as well on the regional council.

This arrangement is vital because much of the success of a regional government depends on achieving the right relationship between the regional council and the councils of the area municipalities.

Admittedly, the people who serve on both councils have a heavy work load—no question about it. But there is no better way of achieving the co-operation and the unity of purpose you need between the two levels of councils.

When they are setting their priorities for local spending, area councillors are obliged to keep the needs of the whole region in mind, since some of their colleagues are regional

councillors too and are right there around the table with them.

It's an arrangement that helps councillors at both levels remember, too, that even though they have different responsibilities, they are both serving the same taxpayers and therefore must share the revenue from a common source.

As for the makeup of the area councils themselves, we are not putting forward any specific recommendations at this time. Instead, we are putting the question to you: How big should these councils be and how should they be elected — at large or by wards?

We hope you will tell us what arrangements you think are best. And if you prefer to see a ward system, rather than a system of elections-at-large, we will want your help and advice in designing suitable ward systems before the first elections are called.

In the interests of getting these two new systems off to a good start, the province proposes to appoint the chairman of each regional council, and this would be done well ahead of the first elections. However, once a chairman had served his — or her — initial term, the choice would be up to the regional council.

By now, I expect many of you are wondering just what the different functions might be for the regional councils on the one hand and their area municipalities on the other.

J. Snow says it's "great"

"I think it's just great," Halton East MPP and Minister of Government Services Jim Snow beamed, "it's an excellent plan."
"A great deal of work has gone into this proposal, at all levels of government. There will be some who object, no matter what it said."
The province is willing to listen to opinions on the proposals, Snow stressed. "There will be room for discussion."
He felt the proposals for Halton will "make for good planning and good government."

Hill will challenge four unit proposal

Esquesing Reeve Tom Hill said he will protest both at the county council and provincial government levels against the proposal to maintain Milton as a single Central Halton unit in a four borough Halton region.
"How any government can go against the majority of opinion, which was a three borough proposal, then slice Oakville up,

take away assessment from Nassagaweya and Esquesing and add it to Milton which hasn't got enough people to fill the houses it's building now, is beyond me," the outspoken township head told this paper.

Hill made it clear he was speaking only for himself and not necessarily for his council, but he insisted the boundaries laid out in the original county council brief were satisfactory.

Bright side

On the bright side, he said that he was happy to see the makeup of local boards be left open for discussion and that he was satisfied with the proposed representation on the regional council.
Deputy-reeve Len Cox pointed out the bulk of his township's commercial and industrial assessment lies in the southern end, which will become part of the Central Halton borough.
"It's certainly not helping us," he suggested.

Cox offered the government a suggestion of his own.
"I think one idea might be to send East Flamboro in with Milton and leave Nassagaweya and Esquesing the way they are."

Councillor Wilfrid Leslie said he feels Milton should have been included in the North Halton

borough. He also suggested the government might have been just as far ahead to extend the parallel boundary divisions proposed for Peel County westward so that they divide up Halton in three parts as well.

Malty concerned

Newly-elected Councillor George Malby said he was a little concerned about the southern end of the township being lost to the Central Halton borough.
"However, I feel there's still room for discussion on this yet, before it becomes final," he added.

He said he was at first surprised at the inclusion of East Flamborough in the Halton region, but saw merit in it once the reasons were explained.

He said the suggested regional council representation figures looked fair to him, but emphasized he is most concerned about the formation of local boards.

"It just suits me dandy," beamed Esquesing Township's school trustee Bill Lawson, a Milton area farmer. "I'm just tickled to death." Lawson noted the proposal for a Halton region was similar to a Board of Education recommendation in 1969.

Nassagaweya severed

Nassagaweya Township Deputy Reeve Jim Watson headed a large delegation from Nassagaweya to the unveiling of Regional Government proposals in Hamilton Tuesday. "I'm not surprised at the outcome," he said after the proposals were read. "We realized many of the boundaries in Halton were going to have to be scrapped."

The people of Nassagaweya would likely be disappointed to see the township severed at 10 Sideroad, "but we have to fight this out at the local level," Watson said.

Residents living north of Highway 401 will be disappointed at losing the race track and its large assessment, to the Central Halton unit, he felt.

His own home and that of Reeve MacArthur are both in the area proposed to be joined with Milton in the central unit.

"Personally there will be no effect on me, we go to church in Milton and my boys play hockey in Milton," he said. But Watson said he would be contacting his neighbors and asking their opinions before council takes any action.

Milton . . . (Continued from Page 1)

hired a bus to transport them to the meeting in Hamilton.

"I'm very happy — Milton got everything it asked for, and then some," Deputy Reeve Bob McCuaig of Milton reports. "It was certainly more beneficial to Milton than I expected."

McCuaig said he had felt all along the province would recommend a four-unit Halton, but felt the town's brief urging four units instead of three was probably a strong influence on the Queen's Park decision.

Councillor Mrs. Hazel Porter, new to council this year, thought Milton should be "very happy" with the outcome of the Tuesday proposals. She said she was sure Milton could handle the increased area.

Milton Police Chief Ray Andress said turning central Halton into a separate unit of



NASSAGAWEYA deputy reeve Jim Watson looks glum as he listens to proposals for regional government in Halton County.

Mrs. MacArthur was ill and unable to attend the presentation of regional government proposals.

government would certainly affect the town's police force, but declined further comment until he had time to study the proposals in more detail. "All this area is oriented towards Milton anyway," he noted.

Kelso, track central unit

Central Halton, as proposed in the regional government suggestions would include a number of familiar names.

Campbellville, Hornby, Milton Heights, Guelph Junction, Drumquin, Omagh, and Boyne, are among the areas included in the proposed central Halton unit.

Mohawk Raceway and Kelso Conservation Area would also be included within the boundaries.

South Halton receptive to concepts

While Oakville and Burlington representatives were receptive to the basic concepts in the regional government proposals for Halton announced Tuesday in Hamilton, several spokesmen for both municipalities suggested they'd have to further study the implications of the report before commenting on details of the proposals.

North Oakville Councillor Don Gordon was happier than most with the report. "It's like a second Christmas for me. I got everything I wanted," he suggested. Gordon said he had

hoped for a Halton-only region with Milton forming the basis for a central area within a two tier region, and he had hoped for the indirect elections, all of which were outlined in the proposal.

North Oakville Councillor Rick Day said he was happy with the boundaries as proposed but was concerned about the southern boundary of the central region. Maps show the central area extending down below the Lower Base Line Rd., but government officials indicated that line was subject to change pending the announcement of the parkway belt — due in a couple of months.

Surprised at dip

Oakville Reeve Allan Masson said he was surprised to see the central area go so far south into Oakville but he acknowledged Milton had made good points in their presentation. He noted the area would remain farmland for a long time if it remained in Oakville but could more readily be serviced by Milton.

Burlington Mayor George Harrington said he was pleased Waterdown and East Flamborough were now part of Halton. "We know them and have worked with them and I am sure we can work together in the future."

Harrington suggested the fact the region has four areas rather than three (as recommended in

From experience with other regions — and in some cases from simple logic — we can see how certain responsibilities must rest with the regional government. Otherwise there is no point in having a regional government.

This principle applies most emphatically of all to the broad, strategic questions that are the main reasons for forming a regional government in the first place. Such as a broad planning strategy for the region, as reflected in an official plan. This is the key to controlling and guiding industrial development and land-use generally.

The area municipalities should meanwhile be making their own contributions in such matters, by developing an administering their own official plans, handling subdivision agreements and settling questions of zoning. All these measures would have to be compatible, of course, with the official plan for the whole region.

In this age of mobility, regional jurisdiction makes sense for certain kinds of roads, and from that it follows that the region should also be responsible for traffic control. Questions of parking, on the other hand, are best shared by the two levels, since in some cases there are broad implications for land use and development, and in other cases, there are parking problems that can be settled more readily at the area-council level.

I am sure I scarcely need to remind you of our government's concern about the broader questions of public transportation, as a means of reducing the congestion and pollution in urban areas throughout the province. We would make it possible for regions to assume broad responsibility for public transit.

Again, the area municipalities should have comparable responsibilities in the matter of land drainage and local roads, parking, as I mentioned a moment ago, would be a shared responsibility. In other areas of concern about land, the area municipalities would also handle parks and recreation.

Water and sewer services in their entirety are among those we strongly recommend as regional responsibilities in Peel and Halton. In some regions, as you may know, these responsibilities are split between the two levels. In Peel and Halton, however, we believe a unified arrangement would strengthen each region's planning ability and would simplify administrative procedures. More particularly, it would enable the regions to cope more readily with heavy growth.

A rather sharp controversy in my part of the province has recently dramatized the growing problem of garbage disposal, and in Peel and Halton it would be unrealistic, in our opinion, to ask each area municipality to handle this problem separately, and so garbage disposal goes into the column of regional responsibilities.

On the other hand, there is no reason why area municipalities should not accept responsibility for collecting garbage. We also suggest assigning to them the task of supplying electricity through their hydro commissions, subject to any change in provincial policy that might stem from the recent report from Task Force Hydro.

In the realm of public protection, we can see police work and emergency measures both working more economically and effectively at a regional level, while licensing — which is another form of protection whether we always think of it that way or not — would probably best be shared between the two levels, depending on the nature of the activity being licensed.

Fire protection, on the other hand, is a function that seems to operate best at the area level, although the region would be urged to appoint someone to prepare and co-ordinate a plan for all fire departments to follow in the event of an emergency.

The other item here is licensing, which would, as I mentioned, come partly under area jurisdiction, health and welfare, following the pattern set in other regions, would become regional concerns in Halton and Peel and I am sure no one will quarrel with the logic of having the region take over the forests now managed by the counties.

In the realm of finance, I will have more to say in a moment about provincial involvement. But in the allotment of responsibilities between regional and area administrations, we show tax collection here as an area responsibility — reflecting our own ideas of what might work best. However, a technical report from our friends in Halton has recommended having the region collect the taxes, and so this question, like so many others we are dealing with here tonight, is wide open for discussion.

(Who knows? Maybe everybody in Halton will decide it would be even better if nobody collected any taxes at all!)

Finally — again on the financial side — there is a strong case to be made for having the regions responsible for capital borrowing. For one thing they are almost sure to be able to borrow money more cheaply, and if that isn't convincing enough in itself I could add that borrowing policies are part of the broad, long-range strategy for which any regional government should be designed.

It is perfectly conceivable that on some of these issues, Peel might decide to go in one direction and Halton in another, which would be fine, as long as they had sound reasons in each case.

the TECO report and passed by county council) would be up for discussion.

Burlington Reeve Les Preston who is chairman of the Halton County Council's newly formed regional government committee said he was pleased with the general concept and felt the plan reflected the feeling of the people. Preston said he would call a meeting for today (Wednesday) if he could get the committee together. "There is still a lot of work to be done," he said.

Oakville Mayor Harry Barrett was perhaps the most adamant of those contacted that the province concur with county council's stand that there be but three areas in the region.

Not happy

North Burlington council representative Mrs. Ella Foote's comments were short and not-so-sweet — she is a strong opponent of any form of regional government and reiterated her stand Tuesday night.

"I'm not happy with the whole thing, because I don't like regional government anyway," she fumed. She was particularly unhappy to see her rural Ward Three sliced up.

Acton is cautious

Reaction from Acton council at Tuesday's meeting was cautious, with agreement on most of the main points of the government's proposals, but some pessimism about a four region Halton.

Mayor Les Duby said he was satisfied up to a point but Milton's central region would be a detriment to a strong North Halton and it was made at considerable sacrifice to Oakville.

Duby said he was slightly amazed that the single Milton proposal could be accepted but there were fiscal and other con-

siderations which might work out better than anticipated.

"But if three area municipalities are acceptable in Peel, why not Halton?" he asked. "Obviously Oakville was sacrificed to the benefit of Burlington."

Reeve G. W. McKenzie felt that Highway 401 should have been the northern boundary for the proposed central Halton area rather than the rim of the Escarpment which the government favored. He felt the central area was too large for Milton to control.