GOVERNMENT

Two new ridings likely in York Region

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Based on the parliamentary prescription and according to 2011 Elections Canada figures, Oak Ridges-Markham, with a population of 169,642, could be diced. As one of Canada's most populous ridings, it could be divided into two, possibly three, ridings by the 2015 federal election, Mr. Wiseman said.

Conservative Oak Ridges-Markham MP Paul Calandra is in agreement.

said. "I represent more people than Prince Edward Island. It's outrageous that my rural north and urban south areas together." constituents' votes don't count as the

The bill to reformulate seat distribution is imminent, he said, noting when a federal commission is struck, he will encourage people living in his riding to make submissions.

"We have to make sure we get it right," he said. "We have to look at the boundaries and make sure there's representa-

"Absolutely." the Stouffville resident tion. At the moment, if Oak Ridges Markham would be split, I would advocate to keep the

York Region will probably get a minimum of two new ridings, Mr. Calandra said.

"It's tough to say, but I imagine we'll get a couple based on population," he said. "The Markham that I represent could be its own riding. Vaughan is another big riding."

Vaughan could change, Mr. Wiseman agreed, citing the ridings 154,206 residents and its status as the region's second-largest electoral district. "Once you make adjustments to one constituency, you have to reconfigure others."

Areas outside York Region with increasingly concentrated populations will more than likely be altered, he said. Using the latest census data, large ridings, including Brampton West, with 170,420 people, Bramalea-Gore-Malton, with 152,700 residents, and Halton, with 151,940 citizens, could expect boundary revisions.

The addition of seats is seen as advantageous to the Conservatives, pundits claim. In York, six of the seven ridings are held by the PCs. The sole Liberal MP is John McCallum in-Markham-Unionville.

Mr. Wiseman isn't so sure.

"They say the Conservatives will bene-

fit," he said. "Not necessarily. I don't want to throw water on the idea, but if sentiment goes against the (Stephen) Harper Conservatives, boundaries won't matter. We can't make assumptions. Politics change and the Conservatives could add or lose seats.

> 'At the moment, if Oak Ridges-Markham would be split, I would advocate to keep the rural north and urban south areas together.'

"I don't think this is a political calcula-

Calling the current formula "ridiculous," the academic doesn't think the House of Commons should be expanded.

"If anything, there should be a flat, permanent number," he said. "In the United States, they've had 435 congressional districts since who knows when."

Independent electoral commissions will decide where and how to incorporate the new seats, he said.

"If this bill isn't passed by Christmas, my understanding is that we'll be stuck with the 1985 formula," Mr. Wiseman said.



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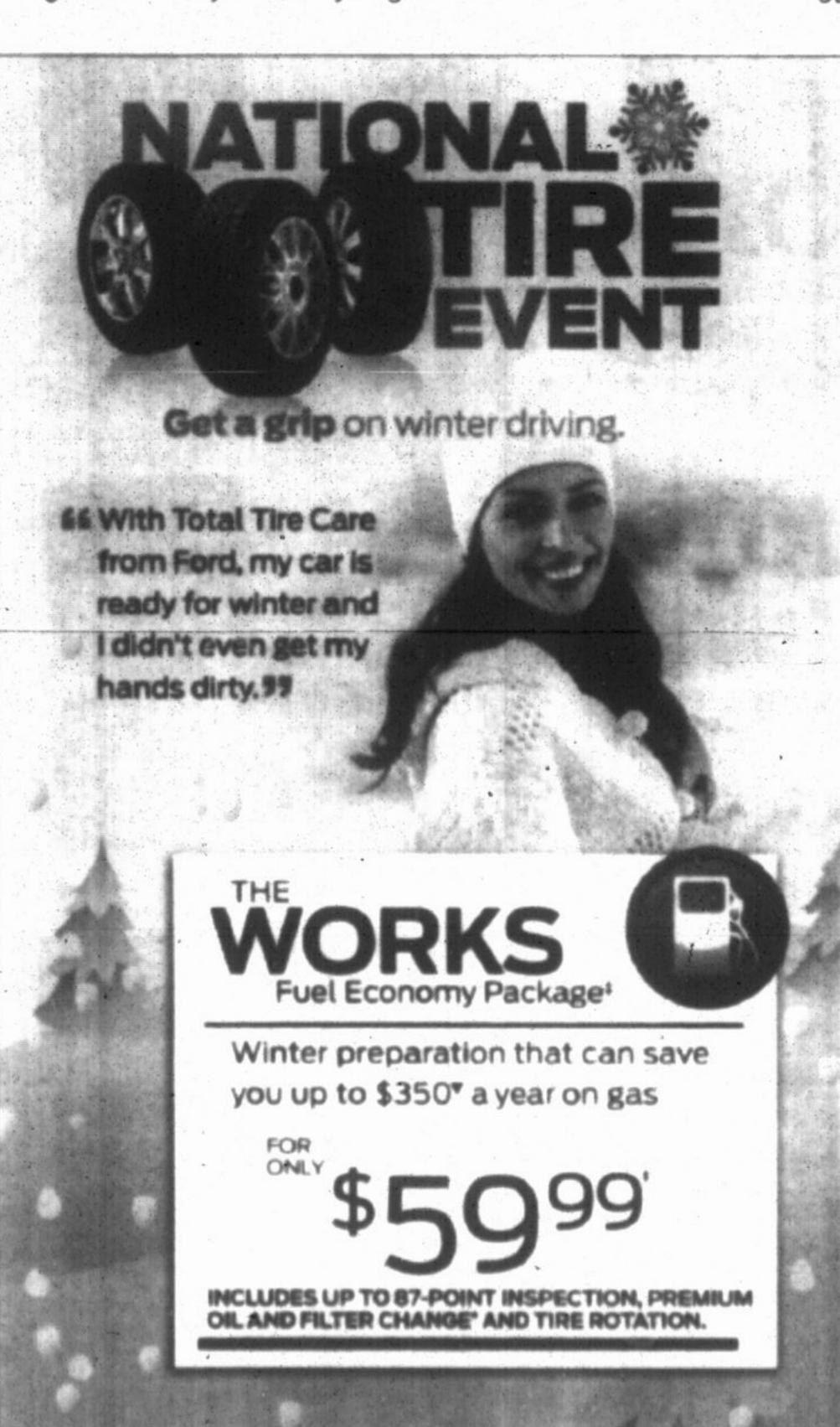
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