

*Electoral Boundaries*

dictions of Georgetown, Acton and part of Esquesing township, this new integrated town has worked hard to unite itself and is just beginning to experience the sweet taste of success. When it finds itself torn in half by a small group of appointed officials who seem to place higher priority on a set of numbers than on a set of human and social values.

What about the dilemma from the federal perspective? Picture two different MPs representing two different halves of the same small town, perhaps on the same local issue at the same time. How rational and efficient is that? What if the mayor and the town council are in the other MP's half of the town? Can I still approach them directly, or does protocol oblige me to approach the other MP first? Halton Hills must remain united, not split in half. Picture one small town council having to deal with two MPs instead of one.

Federal riding boundaries must be kept simplified and in line with the electoral boundary lines of other levels of government, particularly provincial and regional lines. My constituents are becoming confused, frustrated, threatened and even angry by a plethora of riding boundary lines and relationships. In our area, they are finding more and more, to their horror, that they belong to a number of different administrative areas—four governments, several government agencies, like UIC, and a number of private or semi-private zones such as Bell Telephone. They are all expected to keep these various jurisdictions straight in their minds when even a genius would have trouble sorting them out. Perhaps due to lack of co-operation in planning, perhaps due to lack of interest in grass-roots opinions, boundary lines are becoming a bureaucratic nightmare. The constituent deserves a break, with simple coordinated boundary lines, before it is too late to save the credibility and acceptability of our social-political system.

● (1620)

Traditional, close ties between towns and villages in the same riding must be preserved as long as possible and only be severed when each part is populous enough to form its own riding units. The Georgetown area is not only an integral part of Halton Hills now, but has always had strong inter-community ties of every kind with Oakville and Milton—social, cultural, recreational, economic and political. I myself grew up in that amateur sports network and have many long-standing friends all over the riding as a result.

Halton has never had strong ties with the Brampton or Peel areas. In fact, the riding based on Lake Ontario between Toronto and Hamilton have been characteristically tall north-south ridings without strong east-west relationships. The people would travel farther north and south for their activities inside the old riding than they would east and west outside the riding.

Perhaps such patterns of human activity can change, but not rightfully against the will of the people, not overnight and not without full consultation. One day, perhaps the next time around, the population spill-over from Toronto and Hamilton into the Halton area might be great enough to let Oakville stand as a riding on its own, and perhaps Halton Hills to combine with Milton, but not yet; not as long as towns like Halton Hills are threatened with being torn in half for part of its existence.

Population figures and the number of voters in a riding are important, obviously, but should not be the only or even the main determinant in assessing boundary lines. Whatever the commission's rules and guidelines, the amount of work in a riding and whether an elected official can handle it is only indirectly related to the size of his flock. There are many other factors—the nature of the riding, the demands they place on their MP, the ability of the MP and his organization to cope. In the final consensus, as long as the MP and his constituents are happy and satisfied with the existing situation, why should a small group of appointees, unfamiliar with the area, presume to change it against everyone else's wishes? To prevent gerrymandering yes, but what gerrymandering is there when all parties agree? They should not, I submit, buck public opinion, Gouging Georgetown out of Halton would be like tearing off a man's right arm.

Finally, there should be some provision to consider rapid growth centres such as those in the Toronto-Hamilton area. More remote areas like northern Ontario are entitled to retain their representation just on the vastness of their ridings alone, in spite of small and slow-growing populations. They are welcome to keep their ridings if in the bargain we may keep ours. I would be only too happy to take on a larger load than the commission considers proper—in other words, to keep all of my present riding—if it would give an extra riding to northern Ontario.

However, areas like Halton, Brampton and Peel need their own rules to avert chaos, not those of a vastly different area like the north. If part of Halton were given to Brampton, which may well be growing faster than Halton, we might find to our alarm that long before the next boundaries revision Brampton riding was even farther beyond the maximum allowable voter population than Halton.

So, for all these reasons, Mr. Speaker—preventing the axe slaying of the new town of Halton Hills, keeping federal boundaries in line with provincial and regional boundaries, leaving Georgetown at home with her family of communities, putting sacred cows, like population figures, in their proper perspective, opening our eyes to the realities of growth differences between areas like Halton and Peel within metropolitan areas, in contrast to remote areas with vastly different considerations—we implore the commission to reconsider their unbending attempt at surgery in the interest of the patients.

In fact, let us hear from the patient at this point through the voice of the Georgetown Independent, a Halton weekly newspaper, in its lead editorial on March 10, 1976, "Keep Georgetown in Halton":

The Electoral Boundaries Commission decision to lump Georgetown and the former northeast end of ward 2 (Esquesing) with Brampton in a new federal riding, has to be the most unrealistic alternative the commission has conceived to date.

Surely, there is no advantage in taking Georgetown and the northeast corner of Halton region in with Brampton instead of a Halton-Peel riding that included Caledon, Vaughan and King townships? It's like jumping from the frying pan into the fire.

Then a little further on, Mr. Speaker:

The stupidity of the decision is only ameliorated by the knowledge no one from this area had a hand in it. No one on the commission knows the situation well enough to be able to comment knowledgeably on already confusing political boundaries carved out by the province and