

Government Orders

order provided for the first division of the city of Brampton between two electoral districts. Brampton had previously always been entirely within one electoral district, either Peel or Brampton—Halton Hills or Brampton—Georgetown.

The 1991 census disclosed that the population of Mississauga had grown to 463,388, and that of Brampton to 234,445, for a total combined population of 697,833. That population now entitles the two cities to two additional electoral districts, for a total of seven.

As I stated earlier, the electoral quota for Ontario is 97,912. If one calculates an electoral quota for the combined two cities by dividing their total population of 697,833 by the number of electoral districts to which they are entitled, namely seven, the resulting quota for the two cities is 99,690.

• (1720)

At page 13 of its proposals, the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for Ontario in the course of its comments with regard to Metropolitan Toronto, Etobicoke states that three districts within the city of Etobicoke would average about 103,000 which is close to what the commission believes appropriate for urban districts. The city of Etobicoke lies immediately to the east of the cities of Mississauga and Brampton.

The population of Bramalea—Gore—Malton according to the 1991 census was 103,589 which is 5,677 above the electoral quota for Ontario and 3,899 above the electoral quota for the combined cities of Mississauga and Brampton. However the population of Bramalea—Gore—Malton is only 589 above 103,000 which is close to what the commission believes appropriate for urban districts.

It would therefore appear that there is no urgent and pressing necessity to alter the existing boundaries of Bramalea—Gore—Malton.

However the commission was not satisfied with the situation. After deciding that the electoral district of Mississauga South should remain unchanged with a population of 96,208 and that Mississauga East should be altered in area to reduce its population to 101,300, the commission decided to perform major surgery on Bramalea—Gore—Malton to cut its population back to 96,360 from 103,589.

The commission accomplished this feat by removing an area of Brampton lying east of Dixie Road and having a population of 36,593 from the northern part of the electoral district and adding a piece of the northwestern corner of Mississauga with a population of 29,364, most of whom live south of Highway 401 to the southwestern edge of the electoral district, for a net population reduction of 7,229.

This exercise seems to me to resemble cutting one end off a blanket and then sewing most of it back on to the other end in an effort to make a small reduction in the size of the blanket.

In addition the commission appears to have clearly violated one of its own operating principles. Highway 401 forms the entire southern boundary of Bramalea—Gore—Malton. In the course of its comments with regard to metropolitan Toronto, the area north of Highway 401, the commission states at page 15 of its proposals that “the commission believes that Highway 401 forms a physical barrier and should be used as a boundary wherever possible”.

The proposed addition of the populated area south of Highway 401 to the rump of Bramalea—Gore—Malton runs directly contrary to the commission’s view on the role of Highway 401.

The commission’s proposal would create a distorted electoral district resembling a reversed letter *L* of which both extremities would have less in common and be further apart than is now the case within Bramalea—Gore—Malton, thus diluting the community of interest or community identity in the electoral district. Hon. members will thus understand why I have serious concerns as to how the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for Ontario is carrying out its mandate.

Inequality of representation in this House has also been encouraged by the provisions of section 15(2) of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act which provides for a maximum deviation of 25 per cent above or below the electoral quota for an electoral district in a province. In other words, if the electoral quota for Ontario is 100,000, meaning that each resident of the province would have equal representation in this House if the population of each electoral district was 100,000, it would still be perfectly possible and legal to have some electoral districts with populations as low as 75,000 and others with populations as high as 125,000.

• (1725)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Order. It is with reluctance that I rise but the member has used up his full 10 minutes. If the member is going to be just a little longer we might ask the House if there is unanimous consent that he might conclude his remarks.

Would there be unanimous consent to allow the member for Bramalea—Gore—Malton to conclude his remarks?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Malhi: Mr. Speaker, the subject of what shall be an appropriate number of members of Parliament has been referred to frequently in this debate.

At this point I would simply raise for consideration the possibility that perhaps this House would operate more efficiently and effectively if there were dramatically fewer members of Parliament than at present and that there be a fixed number. Those fewer members would have more extensive