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des débats
(Hansard)**

Monday 25 April 2005

Lundi 25 avril 2005

Speaker
Honourable Alvin Curling

Président
L'honorable Alvin Curling

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Monday 25 April 2005

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 25 avril 2005

The House met at 1845.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
OF PEEL ACT, 2005

LOI DE 2005 SUR LA MUNICIPALITÉ
RÉGIONALE DE PEEL

Mr. Gerretsen moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 186, An Act respecting the composition of the council of The Regional Municipality of Peel / Projet de loi 186, Loi traitant de la composition du conseil de la municipalité régionale de Peel.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, minister responsible for seniors): I will be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, Mr. Duguid, the member from Scarborough Centre.

I would like to start off by introducing certain people in the audience today who are here to watch the proceedings. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce Mayor Susan Fennell, who is wearing her chain of office, and councillors Bob Callahan, Grant Gibson, Susan DiMarco, Sandra Hames, Gael Miles and John Hutton, and I believe there are also a number of staff members and commissioners from the city of Brampton here today. I would certainly like to take this opportunity to welcome them here as we discuss this bill.

Our government is committed to building and supporting strong communities across Ontario. We have taken a number of actions to fulfill this commitment. Our greenbelt plan is just one of the ways we are building stronger communities, and we are proud of the legacy we have created with the greenbelt plan, which protects our natural resources and agricultural lands from urban sprawl, improving the quality of life for millions of Ontarians.

Our new provincial policy statement, which promotes a balanced approach to planning, will also help to build stronger communities. It reflects what we heard in our municipal consultation, and it builds on the priorities of local communities.

Earlier today, I announced that over 120 projects to renew local infrastructure have been approved. These

projects are part of the COMRIF, or Canada-Ontario municipal rural infrastructure fund, in which our government will invest up to \$298 million to help communities rebuild their public infrastructure, with the federal government and local governments giving an equal amount over the next five years.

Our memorandum of understanding with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario illustrates how we as a government are committed to consulting with municipalities, including working toward having municipalities involved in federal-provincial discussions on such issues as immigration, affordable housing and the sharing of the federal gas tax revenues. Our comprehensive review of Ontario's municipal act will identify how the act can continue to remain relevant and provide municipalities with the necessary tools to serve Ontario's citizens better.

In all of these initiatives, we have consulted extensively with municipalities and acted on those consultations. This government continues to demonstrate that we will work closely with our municipal partners.

A few days ago, on April 13, I introduced first reading of Bill 186, the Regional Municipality of Peel Act, 2005. We believe that this bill promotes stability in Peel region. It provides a fair and balanced approach to the composition of Peel regional council and better reflects Peel's current population distribution. If passed, it would enable Peel region to turn its full attention to providing effective services for the citizens of Peel.

1850

In Peel region, there has been much debate about the composition of Peel regional council. This long-standing debate has led to uncertainty at Peel regional council and is affecting its ability to carry out its responsibilities.

Let me say that Peel region is one of the models of effective administration in carrying out municipal responsibilities. As a matter of fact, in November last year it received the National Quality Institute's Canada Award for Excellence at the service level: the first municipal government to receive such an award in Ontario, and indeed Canada.

However, for local issues of this nature, this government believes that solutions should be developed at the local level, solutions that reflect the perspectives of all affected municipalities. This government and I on a number of occasions have emphasized this approach with Peel region as well. We have encouraged local representatives, the three mayors and the regional chair, to find a local solution to the challenges surrounding

local governance. Given the difficulties the local representatives had in reaching an agreement, our government became involved, looking to assist the region in finding a local consensus on the issue. We had numerous discussions with the representatives from Peel region, including the mayors and regional chair, who provided important insights into their perspectives on this matter. We also appointed a facilitator to try to help the parties reach an agreement. Once again our actions illustrate that we are a government that values input from its municipal partners and is willing to listen to their ideas. We made every possible effort to develop a solution at the local level. However, after all that, a consensus simply could not be found. So we have decided that we need to move forward. We need to move beyond this roadblock. Peel region needs to have stability. This is a matter that needs to be resolved.

By moving forward with the proposed legislation, our intention is to provide the certainty and resolution on governance issues that the lower-tier municipalities in Peel region—namely the city of Brampton, the city of Mississauga and the town of Caledon—require. Resolving this matter will allow Peel regional council to resume its leadership role in providing regional services. With the support of this Legislature, this bill will provide a fair solution to Peel's challenges that avoids unnecessary and disruptive restructuring or dismantling of the region.

We have considered the concerns of all the parties and we are looking to strike a balance among the diverse local interests. We believe that the best way to do this is for Peel regional council to more realistically represent the current population distribution of Peel region, while ensuring that no single lower-tier municipality has voting control of the regional council. The proposed legislation will give Brampton one additional seat on the regional council, for a total of seven, and give Mississauga two additional seats, for a total of 12. Caledon will continue to have five seats. The chair of the regional council will also have one vote. As in the past, the members of the Peel regional council will be responsible for selecting the chair of the regional council.

Our government recognizes that governance and municipal service delivery can be extremely complex in its nature. I would like to thank local representatives for the dedication in seeking a solution to Peel's challenges, and I know that these can be very difficult issues to deal with. I want to recognize their efforts and also encourage all elected officials in Peel region to move forward to continue to provide the strong leadership that has helped the region be one of Ontario's most effective and efficient for many decades.

The proposed legislation provides the necessary stability for Peel to resume focusing on providing service to its citizens. It enables these municipalities to focus on what they do best. I am confident that the residents of Peel can count on their elected officials to continue working to ensure that their quality of life is second to

none, and I urge the members of the House to support these objectives and vote in favour of Bill 186.

In addition, I should point out a number of salient facts.

First of all, regarding the Adams report that was issued as a result of his having been appointed the facilitator in trying to build a consensus among the parties, the government has adopted eight of the nine recommendations. The only recommendation we could not accept was the recommendation for an additional number of members for a population that may very well increase in the future but is not currently there today. We think seat distribution should follow population growth and not be in advance of that.

There have been some supportive quotes. Mayor Hazel McCallion, the mayor of Mississauga, is quoted as saying, "The province made a fair decision." Mayor Marolyn Morrison, the mayor of Caledon, has said, "We need to get on with serving the residents of Peel and quit the silliness." John Tory, the Leader of the Opposition, in an all-candidates debate on March 8, 2005, said, "There is a need to refine these governments as time goes on, as populations change and communities change." That is exactly what we're doing here tonight with this bill.

I might just indicate what the current population of the region of Peel is. Currently, the population of Brampton stands at 380,000, Caledon at 55,000, and Mississauga at 689,000. The average population per councillor currently is 63,300 for Brampton and 68,900 for Mississauga, and Caledon, being a much smaller community, has an average population per councillor of 11,000. The proposed model that we're suggesting, which would see Brampton's representation increase by one to seven, and Mississauga's from 10 to 12, would mean that the average population per councillor in Brampton will be 54,285, and for Mississauga 57,416. Let me state once again that we have not created a situation in which one municipality will have a majority of the members on the regional council. With a 12, seven and five alignment, none of the municipalities will have the majority vote on the council.

1900

We have a rather unique situation. It is the only region in which one municipality has more than 50% of the population. We simply felt that it was something we had to deal with after all the attempted facilitation and attempts at building a consensus among the parties.

Let me also state that, as far as this government is concerned, we are not restructuring the region of Peel. We are merely adjusting the regional council representation so that it more fairly reflects the population distribution of Peel and balances the interests of the lower-tier municipalities.

With that, I simply urge all the members of the House to support these objectives and vote in favour of Bill 186.

Mr. Brad Duguid (Scarborough Centre): I too want to acknowledge the presence of Mayor Fennell and her members of council. My colleague from Brampton Centre advised me that there's another councillor we missed

in the introduction. Councillor Elaine Moore is here. Welcome.

The Deputy Speaker: While we're making all these recognitions, there is also a councillor who was introduced as a councillor but who is also a former member of this Legislature. In the west members' gallery, we have Robert Callahan, former member from Brampton and Brampton South, in the 33rd through 35th Parliaments. Welcome.

Mr. Duguid, you can continue.

Mr. Duguid: I believe Mayor Marolyn Morrison is here as well in the visitors' gallery behind us. I can't see her from where I am, but the Speaker can probably see her. It's great to have these visitors here.

Before I begin speaking, I'm going to say something about somebody who's not here. I know it's not parliamentary to say that, Speaker, but I think in this case you'll allow me to do so. My colleague and seatmate Vic Dhillon, from Brampton West–Mississauga, would normally be here tonight, but he became a happy father on the weekend, on Sunday, so he's otherwise occupied tonight. I know he has taken an active interest in this debate, as have all our colleagues from that particular region.

I'm pleased to speak to this proposed legislation. If passed, I recognize that it will bring stability to Peel region and provide a fair and balanced approach to the composition of Peel regional council. Peel region has for decades been one of Ontario's most effective and efficient regions—something that's respected Ontario-wide. As the minister stated earlier and is worth repeating, this municipality in Canada was the first to achieve the silver level in the Awards for Excellence, which recognized Peel as an outstanding public-sector organization, something very fitting and well deserved and something that came from the hard work of all the local representatives throughout the entire region. Our government is proud to support Peel region as it continues to deliver excellent services, services that help maintain a quality of life in Peel that is among the best in all of Canada.

However, there is a long-standing debate about the governance of Peel region which has led to uncertainty in that particular region. Local representatives have had prolonged deliberations about the number of regional councillors that should come from each lower-tier municipality—I hate using the phrase “lower-tier municipality,” but it exists—but they've been unable to reach an agreement. That's just a fact. It has nothing to do, really, with the people involved; it's just one of those very, very complex issues, and it has been hard for them to reach an agreement.

This long-standing debate is affecting how Peel regional council operates and its ability to carry out its responsibilities. It's an issue that needs to be resolved. Peel regional council needs to have stability. The people of Peel deserve nothing less. Peel regional council needs to be able to focus on what it's doing and what it's doing

well, and that is providing effective services to the people of Peel.

From the beginning, our government has encouraged Peel region to find a local solution to the challenges surrounding local governments. We became involved only when it became apparent that an agreement could not be reached among local representatives, and we've continued to focus on finding a local solution to this issue.

Our actions are consistent with our commitment to consult with and work together with our municipal partners. We've demonstrated this commitment time after time and have proven that we respect municipalities and value their input. This is in stark contrast to the approach taken by the previous government. The McGuinty government respects municipalities as bona fide orders of government, represented by duly elected members of council and fully accountable to those who elect them. From our greenbelt plan to our review of the Municipal Act to our relationship with AMO, we've illustrated that municipal perspectives are extremely important to this government. We listen to our municipal partners, we respect them, and we do all we can to help them do the tough work they have to do.

In our actions surrounding the issue of Peel governance, we've once again consulted significantly with local representatives. We've had numerous discussions with local representatives from Peel region and have listened to the various positions, and there have been various and disparate positions brought forward.

We also appointed a facilitator, Mr. Justice George Adams, to work toward finding an agreement about the composition of Peel regional council and to address municipal service delivery issues. Justice Adams provided a report that contained a number of recommendations for our government to consider, and I stress that word “consider.” He wasn't appointed to make the decision; he was appointed to give us advice—advice that we've taken a very close, long and hard look at. Many of the recommendations he made were recommendations we agreed with. We appreciate Justice Adams's efforts and work on this matter.

As it turned out, unfortunately a local consensus was not achieved about Justice Adams's recommendations for the composition of Peel regional council. It's unfortunate that a consensus couldn't be reached, but, as I said earlier, that really speaks not so much about the people involved as about the complexity of this particular issue. I think we have to be sensitive to differences of opinion, because we're going to see some differences of opinion on this issue. That's something we expect, something we welcome, something that's just part of this process. It's a complex issue. Not everybody is going to agree on it, but at the end of the day, what we reached is a balanced proposal that will bring stability and certainty to Peel.

That's what we had to do: We had to move toward a resolution on this particular matter. We need to move forward so that Peel regional council can resume its leadership role in providing regional services. The proposed legislation would provide this resolution and

enable Peel region to move forward. It would strike a balance among diverse local interests. It would more realistically reflect the current population distribution of Peel while preserving the voice of all communities. The proposed legislation outlines a more reasonable form of representation, yet it ensures that no single-tier municipality has voting control of regional council. Our proposed legislation does not restructure the region of Peel; it simply adjusts the representation on regional council in a fair and balanced manner. "Fair and balanced" is the key.

The Adams report had proposed that the size of Peel council be based on future population growth. However, we believe that seat distribution should follow population growth rather than lead it. This means that representation takes into account the current population rather than being based on future population growth. The proposed adjustment to Peel council would follow this approach while still taking into account the need to balance the interests of Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga.

Justice Adams also provided a number of recommendations on ways to address service delivery issues in Peel. We fully endorse most of these recommendations and encourage municipal governments to implement them. We realize that municipal service delivery and local governance can be complex issues. The situation in Peel is a testament to this.

We're confident that the lower-tier municipalities in Peel will work together to realize the benefits of this proposed legislation. We're confident that having certainty about local governance will help them focus on working together to provide effective services for their people.

Our government knows that all local representatives are dedicated to serving their communities. We acknowledge their hard work in addressing the challenges in Peel region and we look forward to continuing to work with municipalities as we continue to move forward with building stronger communities. To support stability and strong communities in Peel region, I encourage all members of this Legislature to support Bill 186.

1910

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): I'm very pleased to be here this evening. My colleague Tim Hudak will be here in a few minutes for our comments on the first reading and for our leadoff, but I've been very intrigued with the debate so far.

I listened to the previous two speakers, the minister and his parliamentary assistant, and the first thing I can think of is the number of seats you want. In your recent throne speech, you talked about a minimum of X number of seats in the north, but those comments never centred on representation by population. In this case, you were quick to jump on the bandwagon to present a new piece of legislation.

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism and Recreation): Are you against preserving the north seats?

Mr. Dunlop: The bottom line is that you're the one who had the platform. You're the ones who said that

we're going to have a minimum of 11 seats in the north, and if you—

The Deputy Speaker: I feel a little left out of this conversation. Through the Chair, please.

Mr. Dunlop: Mr. Speaker, if they would follow the same pattern—where do they stand on this issue? It's representation by population in Peel region, but in the rest of the province, it doesn't matter. That's all I'm trying to point out here. That will be brought up a number of times during this debate, because we intend to discuss this. There's nothing wrong with what you're doing in Peel region, but you're going against the very grain of what you're saying in your platform. That's all I wanted to point out. I'd like the minister to explain otherwise.

Hon. Mr. Bradley: I'm telling Jim Gordon.

Mr. Dunlop: That's fine. The Minister of Tourism can talk to Mr. Gordon or whomever he wants. The bottom line is that they're not following their own party platform in the throne speech. We'll be listening to the rebuttal tonight, and we'll also be interested in hearing their comments on why anything would be different in Peel region.

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches—East York): I watched the honourable minister on television. I watched what he had to say about the extensive consultation. Well, I beg to differ, because what you quoted from the mayors is not what they are telling you in letters directly to you.

The first one, April 4, from Mayor Fennell:

"As you are also aware, Mr. Premier, Mayor Morrison and I formally objected in writing to the appointment of a provincial facilitator, urging your government to allow Peel's municipalities to develop a local solution within the purpose and intent of the Municipal Act: a public, transparent and open process prescribed in law. Your government chose to circumvent the provisions of the act, and both Caledon and Brampton participated in the facilitation process under the direction of Judge Adams, and we did so in good faith."

The mayor again, this time dated April 11, writing in a media release:

"This Premier gave me his word there would be no restructuring in Peel," said Mayor Fennell. "This Premier gave me his word that governance was not on his government's agenda. I want to believe that this Premier's word is gold, not coal."

"Mayor Fennell expressed frustration that no details on the proposed legislation were made available by Minister Gerretsen on April 7, and has requested an urgent meeting with the Premier in order to convey the position of Brampton residents and gain some perspective on his government's decision."

Far from dealing with them in an open and transparent way, I suggest that you have excluded them. You have dealt with this behind closed doors. You have excluded them from all meaningful consultation. You have only consulted with one mayor, and we all know which one that is. You have excluded Brampton and Caledon, and you have done a disservice to the people of Peel.

Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West): People in Ontario who are watching this will ask, what is the issue that this bill addresses? It's about a governance structure, which is what Peel region is.

Some 30 years ago, what are now two large cities, Mississauga and Brampton, and one prosperous town, Caledon, were semi-rural areas in which small settlements were knit together by roads. Peel region was set up to permit these small settlements—with names that are still neighbourhood names today: Streetsville, Cooksville, Erindale, and similar names in Brampton and in Caledon—and other areas to afford roads, water, sewer, waste disposal, and some other services. There was no Brampton or Mississauga then as we know them now. That was then; this is now.

People in my city of Mississauga ask now, “Why do we need a fourth level of government?” Peel region is just a governance structure, and it's not cast in stone. It can and should and must evolve with time. When Peel's representation was first distributed, there was no way to predict the explosive growth in the region in general and Mississauga in particular. Mississauga asked last year, “Why do we need this governance structure any more? Its day has come and gone.”

But that's for another time; this is now. The minister has said that Bill 168 is about rebalancing the representation on Peel regional council—nothing more, nothing less. It merely amends the representation within a governance structure. With more than 680,000 residents, about the same as the population of New Brunswick, Mississauga represents two thirds of the region's population but has a minority of seats on the regional council. The proposed solution brings Mississauga's portion of the regional council to exactly half. Brampton and Caledon will be no more hard done by in the future than Mississauga was in the past. That's why I support the bill.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark-Carleton): While I represent a riding in the east, I have some knowledge of the city of Brampton. I have some good friends, and I also know of this issue to some degree. This really is a betrayal of the people of Brampton. It's a betrayal of the growing trend in Peel region. There has been no effort on the part of Mississauga to reach a compromise with regard to the representation on the regional council of Peel.

There is no question that this is payback time: payback time by the Liberal government to the mayor of Mississauga. This is a betrayal of the people of Brampton and Caledon with regard to what is going to go forward in terms of regional government in Peel.

We have in the audience the mayor of Brampton, who is watching this debate tonight. I congratulate Linda Jeffrey, a member from Brampton, who's going to vote against this bill because she feels the same way I do with respect to the regional councillors in Peel.

Over the past history of the regional council of Peel, on only two occasions have there been blocked votes by the municipalities. These regional councillors have acted

reasonably in the past and they will act reasonably in the future. Let's make a decision for the future; not, for some unknown reason, to try to placate the ambitions of a municipality that wants to maintain control of Peel region.

The Deputy Speaker: Reply?

Hon. Mr. Gerretsen: Let me start by saying that in the 10 years I have been here, I have never hurled personal accusations against members on the other side of the House, whether I was on that side or on this side. I resent some of the comments that were made here tonight.

We did everything in our power to allow the parties to bring consensus to their own situation. I have the highest regard for Mayor Fennell, Mayor Morrison, Mayor McCallion and Chairman Kolb. I am absolutely positive that they are working as hard as they possibly can for their individual municipalities. We have made every effort to allow the parties themselves to reach a consensus. We allowed for about three or four months last year, starting at just about this time, or it may even have been in March, to try to get them to work out the solutions themselves. They weren't able to. We appointed Justice Adams, and we agree with eight of the nine recommendations he made. We simply cannot agree with the notion that you appoint people to represent the municipality now for future population growth. It may very well be that at some point in the future this will have to be revisited.

I again confirm the fact that no one municipality will have a majority vote. It's my understanding that over the past 10 to 12 years, the chair of the municipality has been chosen with support from all three municipalities. There's absolutely no reason that can't continue.

We think Bill 186 is the right thing to do, and that's why we're asking members on all sides of the House to vote for this.

1920

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln): I'm pleased to rise and contribute to the debate as the official opposition's critic on Bill 186, An Act respecting the composition of the council of The Regional Municipality of Peel. I welcome Her Worship Mayor Fennell, the members of the Brampton council and the other municipal leaders here today. I'm not supposed to wave to the gallery, but I will acknowledge that it's great to see people here tonight, Mr. Speaker. As you know, it's rather uncommon to have guests in the gallery during a night sitting, which I think shows the degree of angst that exists in some of the constituent municipalities of the region of Peel, not only over the changes in this legislation but also over what it may do to what has always been a model region.

It also epitomizes the problems with Dalton McGuinty and his style of leadership. Let me get into that first, before I get into the specifics of the bill. On Friday, April 1, the Brampton Guardian had an excellent editorial that characterized the nature of Dalton McGuinty's decision-making around this very important debate about the fu-

ture of Peel. The editorial is entitled “Dalton Is Waffling.”

Mr. Dunlop: No kidding.

Mr. Hudak: My colleague from Simcoe North says, “No kidding.” As my colleagues know, a common aspect of debate during question period in this Legislature is about the number of times that Dalton McGuinty has changed his mind on issues. He’s not exactly somebody who sticks to his word.

Interjection.

Mr. Hudak: That’s a bit of an understatement, I say to my friend from Ottawa.

Interjection.

Mr. Hudak: I know the member from Scarborough had been a big supporter of John Tory. Now he’s changed his mind, I guess, and is no longer a big supporter of John Tory. I know the member from Scarborough has several positions on the issue.

But to get back to the point, Dalton McGuinty has established an incredible record of broken promises in a very short period of time. We’ve been quantifying them, and I think it’s some 45 or 46. You lose track of the broken promises. Not only does he break promises, but it seems that if he gets pushed enough, he always bends. Dalton McGuinty has a habit of drawing a line in the sand and then, as soon as push comes to shove, he retreats. I believe this issue speaks to that style of leadership, which I find to be a very unfortunate style of leadership, or lack thereof, for the province of Ontario.

The Brampton Guardian: “Dalton Is Waffling.”

Hon. Mr. Bradley: They’re very brave when Hazel’s not in the gallery.

Mr. Hudak: I say to my friend from St. Catharines that I think the Brampton Guardian would say this no matter who was reading the Guardian, but people may not have had the chance. The opening paragraph:

“Dalton Is Waffling

“Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal Party are quickly becoming the punchline to a joke. From now on, when people make promises they have no intention of keeping or say one thing and then do another, we can accuse them of ‘pulling a McGuinty.’”

Mr. Dunlop: Or a Dalton.

Mr. Hudak: Well, they called it “pulling a McGuinty” in the Brampton Guardian.

The editorial goes on to say in conclusion about their degree of disappointment in Dalton McGuinty’s leadership on this issue:

“What it all comes down to is the indecisiveness and pandering of our Premier.

“Dalton, please, it’s time to end this. It’s time to put into place the recommendations of your hand-picked facilitator.

“Failing that, it’s time to back off from the situation entirely.”

Then they conclude, “But the worst thing you can do is come across as a spineless lackey....”

Those aren’t my words. They are the words of the Brampton Guardian registering their strong disappoint-

ment, and, I would argue, if I am reading the faces in the gallery correctly, the strong disappointment of municipal leaders in Brampton and Caledon with the Premier’s indecisiveness and lack of leadership on this very important issue.

It’s not only for Peel region. I hope in my remarks to talk about how this may impact the rest of the province as well, but for the here and now, it’s a major issue that has taken a significant degree of the energy of municipal leaders in Peel region away from focusing on other important issues—improving police services, for example, improving local roads, local health services—that I know they’re committed to. But because Dalton McGuinty has had this long, twisted dance around this issue—probably almost a year of this government’s involvement—it has taken a lot of energy away from focusing on improving municipal services and to the issue of how many councillors from each of the municipalities are going to sit around the table.

I’ll give some specifics behind the Brampton Guardian’s editorial. Let’s look at the history. The platform of Dalton McGuinty when he was in opposition was an encyclopedia of promises. If you had an issue, he had a promise for you. He was so keen on moving from this side of the floor to that side of the floor that he promised everything to everybody.

We saw a very, very sad situation, by way of example, just a few weeks ago.

Mr. Dunlop: Autistic children.

Mr. Hudak: The member from Simcoe North is on to the issue right away. Autistic children over the age of six and their parents came to this gallery and called on Dalton McGuinty to keep his promise to fund autistic services to children over two. He wrote down and pledged to these parents and their disabled children, those suffering from autism, that he would increase funding. He has broken that promise. He broke a promise to parents and children suffering from autism. It is hard to imagine a more ignoble action than breaking a promise to parents and the autistic children they are trying to help out.

The Ontario Human Rights Commission ordered Dalton McGuinty, recommended that, and a court recommended it, but still Dalton McGuinty was keen on breaking that promise.

The point I was making is that back in the days when Dalton McGuinty was promising everything to everybody to try to win some seats, to get his ambition to become the Premier of Ontario, there was no promise left unturned. If you wanted it, it was yours; it was in the platform. And we’ve seen the result: already, to date, 40-some broken promises, and the province is hurtling back to the big, bad debt days under the NDP.

Sadly, I think all politicians now have been tainted by Dalton McGuinty. People say, “All you guys break your promises.” It’s sad.

Hon. Mr. Bradley: Aided by your eight years in power.

Mr. Hudak: I know the member for St. Catharines is an honourable man and a statesman. I know he must be frustrated by all the broken promises. I know that in the cabinet room, behind closed doors, he is fighting for autistic children and their parents but has been forced to toe the party line, sitting in that cabinet seat.

One very interesting thing: In that encyclopedia of promises, there was not a single promise to restructure governance in the region of Peel; not a thing. Everything under the sun was promised by Dalton McGuinty to get into office, but he didn't say a word about restructuring. Am I right, I say to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing? I believe I'm right. We've looked through the promises and have found no indication that he would restructure governance in the region of Peel or any other region. In fact, I believe Dalton McGuinty promised not to get into these types of restructuring decisions, in a general sense.

That was the run-up to all this during the campaign period: In trying to win votes, be everything to all people. Dalton McGuinty said nothing about this issue, did not commit to this as part of his campaign, did not commit that he was going to bring in Justice Adams; nothing of the kind. Suddenly, while in office, he twisted in the wind, backed down and changed his mind.

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But it didn't happen in a hurry. It wasn't like Dalton McGuinty said one day, "My goodness, I've got a plan for Peel region. I'm going to enact it because I believe strongly in it." It wasn't anything like that. In fact, if you look back to January 2004, Premier McGuinty stated very clearly that restructuring in Peel was not part of Dalton McGuinty's agenda. What is that, 16 months ago? Already into his mandate, the Premier said that Peel restructuring was not part of his agenda. God bless him. For once, it was consistent with his campaign platform. But when push came to shove, Dalton McGuinty again backed down.

In June 2004—I believe this was a letter; I don't have it in front of me, but I'm sure my colleagues across the floor will correct me if I'm wrong—Premier McGuinty said his government would not be making any restructuring changes in Peel. Once again, for a while it was consistent with his campaign promise that he would not be intervening in the Peel governance issues.

One month later, in July 2004, the Orangeville Banner and the Toronto Sun both reported that the member for Vaughan–King–Aurora, the finance minister, Greg Sorbara—who sometimes is the Deputy Premier and sometimes, people think, is the real Premier—confirmed that municipal restructuring is not on the government's agenda. In fact, he said, "It is not part of our agenda to become involved in municipal restructuring." If you're Brampton, if you're Caledon, if you're other municipalities, you figure, well, you have a couple of good cards in your hand, because both the Premier and the finance minister, the Deputy Premier, said that restructuring is not in the cards. You figure you're in a pretty

good position. But when it comes to Dalton McGuinty and his promises, don't make any bets.

In August 2004, the Toronto Star reported that the finance minister, Greg Sorbara, offered to provide a facilitator to work with Peel. The Star also characterized this as a sudden "about-face for the government."

So during the campaign, in opposition, then right through from January to July, it was not part of the agenda. Then Dalton McGuinty changes his mind, breaks his campaign promise, and in August 2004, the Toronto Star reported that the government had committed to providing a facilitator to work with Peel on the restructuring issue. So suddenly, despite denials, despite campaign promises to the contrary, it is on the table and a facilitator would be appointed.

A couple of months later, in October 2004, the Toronto Star reported that Justice George Adams had been hired to mediate a resolution to Peel restructuring. I have a great deal of respect for Justice Adams. If you have to hire a facilitator in Ontario for various issues, Justice Adams is highly recommended. I hope those in the audience had a good experience with Justice Adams. I certainly did, as a former minister in the government. Consumer and Business Services, for example, utilized Justice Adams in the funeral services business, in modernizing that legislation that was nearly a century old. I believe Justice Adams was respected by all parties involved. I think they felt they had a fair hearing with Justice Adams and looked forward to his report.

That was in October 2004. The Star added that Adams would try to find an "in-house solution," I guess meaning a consensus-based solution. Failing that, Adams's report would be delivered to the government, which would then decide on actions to be taken. Usually when you hire a facilitator, it's defined as a solution that's agreeable to all parties involved to try and find the right compromises. Then, if that is achieved, you act on that solution. Justice Adams certainly is one of the more respected facilitators in the province of Ontario. I believe that those constituent municipalities that participated in this had full expectation that Justice Adams's report would be implemented or that the status quo would be maintained.

In December 2004 Justice Adams reported. The Globe and Mail reported that he had recommended two more seats for Mississauga region, five more for Brampton, and Caledon would be the status quo. So in December 2004, the response was in the public realm via the Globe and Mail. Despite it being there, despite months and months of time and energy being taken up on this issue, Premier McGuinty sat on that report for at least three months. We had three more months of waiting, three more months of debate, three more months of energy that could have been put into improving regional services, waiting for Dalton McGuinty to make up his mind.

In February 2005, we were in receipt of a letter from a Caledon councillor about a conversation with Dalton McGuinty at a reception at Mr. Duncanson's house, who was a Liberal candidate in the riding of Dufferin–Peel–Wellington–Grey.

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke): He didn't do that well, did he?

Mr. Hudak: Regardless of how Mr. Duncanson did in the election, it must have been a good reception, because Premier McGuinty was feeling a little giddy, I guess, and said that he would abide by Justice Adams's report—this, coming from a Caledon councillor. Maybe I'll hear from the government that the Caledon councillor's report is inaccurate, but I think that if it takes a judgment between the word of Dalton McGuinty, who has broken 40-some promises, and a councillor from Caledon, I'm going to side with the councillor from Caledon, based on Dalton McGuinty's track record. So in February 2005, Premier McGuinty promises at this Bob Duncanson event to abide by Justice Adams's report.

In March 2005, my colleague the member from Brampton Centre, Mrs. Jeffrey, reaffirmed in the Brampton Guardian that the Liberal cabinet position is to do nothing unless all the mayors agree. That seemed to be consistent with Dalton McGuinty's second or third position. After he initially said he wouldn't get involved and there would be no restructuring, they seemed to say, "Well, maybe if there's a consensus." Brampton Centre is consistent with that, saying that there would be no changes in March 2005 unless all three mayors agree. Presumably that might be the Justice Adams report, if all three mayors agreed; if not, maybe status quo. But the member for Brampton Centre was confident in the Liberal cabinet position, and I believe she's right. In Dalton McGuinty's shifting of these issues, in his political gymnastics of flip-flopping all around this issue, I believe at the time, in March 2005, that Dalton McGuinty's position—his third or fourth position; it's almost like the Kama Sutra of positions on Peel restructuring, the number and varieties that Dalton McGuinty has taken on this. Dalton McGuinty and cabinet had decided not to get into restructuring, for all they had promised that, unless all three mayors agreed.

However, shortly thereafter, something happened; something transpired. I'm not sure exactly what it was, but in early April of this year, just a few weeks ago, according to the Toronto Star, Minister Gerretsen and the Premier, I guess in cabinet, decided to adopt yet another position on Peel restructuring and to take the esteemed Justice Adams's facilitation report that months of work had been spent on, and which had spent months sitting on Dalton McGuinty's desk, and they wrapped it up in a little paper ball and shot it into the basket—the work out the window.

Mr. Dunlop: How much did that cost?

Mr. Hudak: We don't know what the cost was. Maybe my colleagues across the floor can let me know what the cost of that was. I know that the whip is somebody who's very financially responsible, and he may know the cost of that.

Despite the work and Justice Adams's attempts to try and find a mediated solution, Dalton knew best. Dalton McGuinty said, "You know what? I know best, and I'm going to make my own solution." Never mind what

Brampton thought; never mind what Mississauga thought; never mind what Caledon thought; never mind what regional chair Kolb thought; never mind what Justice Adams thought; never mind what Brampton Centre thought. Dalton McGuinty suddenly, after a year and a half of adopting various positions, was sure that Dalton McGuinty had come to a miracle solution, the wisdom of Solomon, and said, "You know what? I've got my own answer: two seats for Mississauga, one for Brampton, and that's it."

Mr. Dave Levac (Brant): Is that something Mike Harris used to do?

Mr. Hudak: Quite the opposite. You know what? Whether it's Mike Harris, whether it's Bob Rae, it's hard to think of another political leader who has taken so many different positions in such a short time on an issue as Dalton McGuinty has done on Peel restructuring. It's like the Brampton Guardian said, "What it all comes down to is the indecisiveness and pandering of our Premier" of Ontario. After months of saying that it wasn't on the agenda, and then hiring Justice Adams, sitting on the report for months, all rolled up in a paper ball and tossed out, Dalton McGuinty had his miracle solution.

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This puts the member for Brampton Centre in a difficult position. I look forward to her remarks tonight and commend her, because she appears to be the first Liberal member of the government who is willing to vote against Dalton McGuinty, and I congratulate her for that, standing up for her constituents. It puts her in a difficult position, because I have no doubt, in March, she was assured that there was going to be a consensus-based approach, and Dalton McGuinty flip-flopped on the issue, leaving his member from Brampton Centre out in the cold.

I believe that Brampton Centre—and maybe she'll speak about it—heard from the Premier or the Premier's staff or a minister that that was the cabinet position at the time. She went out there, confident in that position, I believe; sticking to it. Then she found out that, yet again, Dalton McGuinty changed his mind and had a brand new idea, leaving his member from Brampton Centre out there.

It also puts the Minister of Finance in a curious position. We often jest that the Minister of Finance, the member for Vaughan–King–Aurora, is the real Premier. We often make that suggestion.

Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough): No. You're wrong.

Mr. Hudak: Maybe I'm wrong. I certainly respect his authority. He's definitely a skilled politician; there's no doubt about it. Sometimes, when we look across the way and we can't see behind the cabinet doors, we think Greg Sorbara is the real Premier in the province. My colleagues are saying no.

You know what? I'm starting to believe you, because Greg Sorbara, the finance minister, like Brampton Centre, went out on a limb and told people there would be no restructuring in the region of Peel, and he was

wrong. Dalton McGuinty had his own idea. Dalton McGuinty had other plans. He didn't care what they said locally. Dalton knew best, the fifth or sixth time around. So not only has he left the member for Brampton Centre out in the cold, but he's having conflicts with his own finance minister. So you wonder how they make the decisions over there when they have members saying all kinds of different things about an issue of great importance to the region of Peel and to other regions across the province because of its implications.

I'm looking at my map here. There must be interesting conversations between the member for Brampton Centre and the member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale, because they sit together, right over there, side by side, the two of them. Again, I commend the member for Brampton Centre for sticking to her position and suggesting she will vote against this legislation.

What's surprising is, if Brampton Centre is sticking to the municipality's position, strongly vocalized through Her Worship and councillors from Brampton, why does the member for Brampton-Gore-Malton-Springdale similarly not come forward with a strong position? It's not like it was suddenly slipped on to the radar screen. Lord knows we've been talking about it in Peel region for some time, and the province, as I said, has been involved since back in—what?—June or so of 2004. If the local papers are consumed by it and the local councillors have a lot to say about it, surely the member for Brampton-Gore-Malton-Springdale must have an opinion of some kind, but he's not talking about it. He has gone silent.

I understand the member for—I'm not sure of the riding name exactly—Brampton West-Mississauga, Mr. Dhillon, and his wife are celebrating the arrival of a son. Am I correct in this? So I want to congratulate the member for that. It's certainly very exciting. I know he's a young member and he's starting out a young family, and I congratulate him for that. So, obviously some important things on his mind and that of his wife.

Interjections.

Mr. Hudak: I didn't know I'd get this kind of heckling. I don't know if that falls within the realm of debate on Bill 186.

At any rate, I congratulate the member from Brampton and wish him and his wife and the new son, if I understand correctly, all the best for a healthy and prosperous life for the child. When that member is able to resume his duties, we'll look forward his opinion on Brampton restructuring as well.

It's very curious that the Dalton McGuinty government has taken so many different positions so often on this Brampton/Caledon/Mississauga restructuring issue in the region of Peel.

Let me talk a bit about Justice Adams. I mentioned that I had had the chance to work with Adams's recommendations when I was consumer minister. He was an Ontario Superior Court Justice, a law professor, an assistant Deputy Minister of Labour, chair of the Grievance Settlement Board of Ontario, vice-chair of the

Ontario Education Relations Commission. With that great background and his interpersonal skills, he started his own mediation consulting business and has been involved in a number of high-profile mediations, including dealing with double-hatters, Algoma and Stelco contract settlements and, as I mentioned, involved in funeral services and cemeteries work, which was a very challenging issue for those who followed it on the consumer side; somebody with a very esteemed background, no doubt hired because of that background and hired to be taken seriously. So it's shocking that the government would so cavalierly tear up Justice Adams's recommendations and throw them into the waste bin of history—I suggest, because Dalton McGuinty couldn't make a decision and stick to one approach to this issue.

Justice Adams was given a very serious mandate: to discuss with those involved in potential restructuring, or the services as a whole, in Peel region. His job, if I understand it correctly, was to try to develop a consensus among municipalities in Peel region, and if that wasn't possible, his report was to form the basis of any changes in regional government. When Justice Adams tabled his report, he had made nine different recommendations, but instead of following through with Justice Adams's advice, Dalton McGuinty and his brain trust decided to cherry-pick and only implement the recommendations that they wanted, and then to impose their own Dalton-knows-best solution.

This sort of erratic approach, this approach of saying one thing and doing another or this approach of somebody pushing hard enough that you back down, sadly has become characteristic of Dalton McGuinty's style of leadership.

You would have thought with the greenbelt legislation, for example, that the government would have worked very closely with municipalities and worked with their own maps to see which areas were already protected, should be protected, which areas were scheduled for growth. We found some very sad, sorry examples, because Dalton McGuinty and the minister ignored that approach. There was a junkyard that was part of the greenbelt; a cemetery; a waste disposal site. Our farmers in Niagara are talented cherry growers, peach growers, but they're not going to grow cherries and peaches in a graveyard or in a dump.

Strong allegations were made that if you went to the right fundraiser and you paid \$10,000 per plate, you might get your land exempted from the greenbelt. But if you were a small farmer in Niagara or Durham or Halton region or in Peel region, or in Brampton, as a matter of fact, who wanted to see why your land was included in the greenbelt or if other properties should have been included based on science: Shut out. Some, playing on this line, even brought phony \$10,000 cheques to Queen's Park to present to the Premier to make their point. If you were an average landowner in the greenbelt area, you didn't get the respect of being told you were there; no appeal mechanism except through the minister's office itself.

In another major betrayal to the people of Ontario: despite promising not to increase taxes, Dalton McGuinty increased taxes—maybe the largest tax increase in the history of the province. He looked into the cameras and he made a pledge to every taxpayer that he would not raise their taxes. Maybe beneath the TV screen he had his fingers crossed; maybe there was a little asterisk in there somewhere that I couldn't pick up without high-definition TV; I don't know, but it's clearly a broken promise.

Talking about balanced budgets, I don't think you have a hope, I really don't. I'll be shocked—

Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth–Middlesex): O ye of little faith.

Mr. Hudak: Maybe so. Maybe the member from Perth–Middlesex knows of another major tax increase coming up. Certainly Dalton McGuinty and Greg Sorbara did that in the last budget: tried to balance the books. Everything I've seen shows that we're back in those bad old days of runaway deficits, high spending and high taxation. There's no doubt about it: We're going to see a significant deficit.

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Not only did the finance minister promise, in Bill 186, that there would be no restructuring of Peel region; that very same finance minister said that the deficit this year was going to be \$2.2 billion. Then he was caught out by the Provincial Auditor and was forced to reveal some \$6-billion deficit for this past fiscal year, and I worry about what the next budget is going to contain.

Sadly, what has happened with respect to Peel region—the broken promises, the shifting of positions, taking actions contrary to campaign commitments—is perfectly consistent with Dalton McGuinty's behaviour while in office.

If this bill passes, basically what it will do is, the regional council in Peel will be made of up to 24 councillors plus the regional chair after the elections in 2006. If passed, Mississauga would have 12 of those seats, and Brampton and Caledon, between the two of them, would have the other 12. Brampton would have an additional seat to what it has today to recognize some of the growth that's taking place, although not what Justice Adams asked about future growth. Nonetheless, you would have a regional council in Peel that would be divided right down the middle on some issues: 12 votes in Mississauga; 12 in Brampton and Caledon. It does beg the question, will there be problems with a deadlocked Peel regional council down the road? Will this be more of a recipe for deadlock as opposed to trying to find compromises that all three municipalities could agree with?

As my friend from Durham region knows, if there is a tie in the vote, if that were to take place on some major issue, it would be up to the regional chair to block the vote. I do apologize to the minister; the parliamentary assistant gave some clarity on how the regional chair would be appointed in the future. Right now, the regional chair is elected by the members of Peel council. Chair

Kolb does not run for a regional seat and has been elected by the members of council to be the regional chair.

Some regions take different approaches, it's true. There are different models. Sometimes the chair runs region-wide. In Niagara, traditionally the chair has been a member of council and then that person's seat is backfilled. There are different approaches. In Peel region, the chair has been elected from outside of council. I think I'm right when it comes to this.

Considering that the regional chair, in a potentially deadlocked council, is going to play a major role in breaking ties—not necessarily a conciliator trying to bring sides together—brings up the spectre of a deadlocked council, which gives, really, a greatly enhanced potential role for the regional chair, who would become one of the most powerful politicians in the entire province of Ontario if there were a good number of deadlocked council decisions. Based on some of the history we've seen in the last little while, Premier McGuinty and Minister Gerretsen's propensity to exacerbate that division on council—their shifting of position, their dallying on the issue—I would argue, has exacerbated debates at regional council and has the likelihood of increasing deadlocks.

Interjection.

Mr. Hudak: Maybe Mississauga doesn't believe me, but I certainly have heard that. People have commented on this bill, a fear of a deadlocked council. We'll ask the gallery. Is there a concern? I'm seeing a lot of nodding heads. Mississauga looked down at his papers. Take my word for it, Mississauga, I say: There is a concern about a deadlocked council.

The regional chair will have to break those ties. What we don't fully understand, because the minister has not been clear—again, please correct me if I'm wrong—is what will happen if the vote for the regional chair is deadlocked. I don't think we have an answer for that quite yet.

Judging by the Premier's interest in manipulating council at the region, there certainly is concern in Peel region that the Premier may appoint a hand-picked individual. Maybe that's now allowed in legislation; I would like to know if I am wrong. There is a concern. I hope we'll hear this at hearings. I hope we will have hearings in this bill in Peel region. I would like an answer as to what happens if the vote for the regional chair is deadlocked. Does the Premier have the ability to appoint his hand-picked individual? If that's not the case, does the current chair stay in place until the tie is broken? If that's not the case, does the clerk play some kind of role? How is the tie broken? Unfortunately, I don't think they've thought this through, because I have not heard how the regional chair would be determined in the event of a deadlocked council.

Certainly that's a concern because of the increased debate on governance issues caused by Dalton McGuinty's interference and shifting positions on the Peel council issue. As far as we can see from the official opposition—the third party may know as well—we have

not seen an answer as to how the regional chair would be determined if there was a tie. I do worry that it might be one of Dalton McGuinty's hand-picked cronies. Who knows what they'll end up with? I have no doubt that in Peel region, they'd like to pick their own chair and not have one selected by the Premier and his cabinet.

Hopefully we'll have some answers on that. Maybe they'll allay the fears that exist in Peel region about a deadlocked council, but what I do fear is that Peel regional council, which had been a model of efficiency, will be turned into a model of Dalton McGuinty himself: deadlocked, dithering and unable to make a decision. Maybe the past will be proven wrong, but certainly they're laying the groundwork to cause further deadlocks and arguments over governance at council, as opposed to improving local services.

I think what really gets under our skin here in the opposition is the inconsistency between what Premier Dalton McGuinty says about an issue and what he actually does about an issue. We all know Dalton McGuinty's approach during the campaign was to say a lot of things to a lot of people to try to get elected. We do know that he didn't mention anything about Peel restructuring in his campaign documents, and we know that for his first 16 or 18 months in office, Dalton McGuinty, his Minister of Municipal Affairs and his finance minister all said that restructuring in Peel was not on the table.

We even know, according to the Toronto Star, what he committed to the mayor of Brampton, who has joined us here this evening. Here's a quote in the Toronto Star—I know my colleague has already mentioned this—from the mayor of Brampton: “This Premier gave me his word there would be no restructuring in Peel. This Premier gave me his word that governance was not on his government's agenda. I want to believe that a Premier's word is gold, not coal.”

Strong language from a mayor representing one of Ontario's most dynamic and growing communities, language I have no doubt Mayor Fennell did not use lightly, but which indicates a great deal of frustration with Dalton McGuinty's leadership or lack thereof on this issue.

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You have to wonder, too: If they're taking such an erratic approach on this issue of Peel restructuring, who knows what else is going to happen? Who knows what region is going to be next if Dalton McGuinty suddenly has another great idea that he's going to mess around with regional governance? If somebody pushes him hard enough or twists his arm enough, is Dalton McGuinty going to cave in? I come from Niagara region. Niagara region has a balance on council between the larger municipalities and the smaller municipalities. St. Catharines and Niagara Falls combined have about half of the region of Niagara's population.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker: Order, Minister.

Mr. Hudak: It's interesting to hear the minister heckling about amalgamations, what with his own broken promises on Kawartha Lakes. Talk about setting a tone as

Minister of Municipal Affairs. One of the first things he did was to sneak into Kawartha Lakes and say that the promise he made during the campaign wasn't going to be kept. Then you snuck out of there as fast you could, and I don't think you've been back. So I find it passing curious that the Minister of Municipal Affairs would heckle us about municipal restructuring when one of his first betrayals of the voters of Ontario took place in Kawartha Lakes. They made a promise there to win votes, but once they got in office, they tossed that promise into the waste bin, just like you tossed Justice Adams's mediation report into the waste bin.

Interjection.

Mr. Hudak: It does. It characterizes the Dalton McGuinty approach to municipal affairs that one of the very first things you did was break a promise with respect to Kawartha Lakes. It epitomizes it. It symbolizes it. One of the first promises that Dalton McGuinty broke was that he was going to stop 6,000 houses on the Oak Ridges moraine. “Come hell or high water, I'm going to stop 6,000 houses on the Oak Ridges moraine.” What did he do when he got into office? He buried that promise beneath one of those very same 6,000 houses that Dalton McGuinty built on the Oak Ridges moraine. That promise was buried under the basement of those houses in the Oak Ridges moraine. The minister still remembers the giant chipmunks that chased him around.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. We have guests from a municipal council tonight, and I'm sure they don't hear this at their council meetings. Let's let the speaker get on with his business.

Mr. Hudak: The minister was talking a little bit about municipal restructuring, and one of the earliest broken promises was the broken promise on Kawartha Lakes. One of the early broken promises of Dalton McGuinty was basically to do a 180-degree turn on his promise about houses on the Oak Ridges moraine.

Interjection.

Mr. Hudak: But people talk about that. If you listed the hall of shame of Dalton McGuinty broken promises, the Oak Ridges moraine would probably come up in the top five to 10.

Interjection.

Mr. Hudak: You're right; breaking the promise on taxes, breaking the promise on balancing the budget and, if you're in Peel region, breaking the promise of not getting involved in the restructuring are going to be in Dalton McGuinty's hall of shame. But I'll tell you, for the average person, the broken promise to stop the housing on the Oak Ridges moraine is in Dalton McGuinty's hall of shame of broken promises, and the giant chipmunks will attest to that.

Hon. Mr. Gerretsen: You stole the chipmunks.

Mr. Hudak: The chipmunks felt betrayed. They said they wanted science behind the greenbelt decisions and they have yet to see that.

I'm getting a little off Bill 186, but I'm trying to show that unfortunately, when it comes to the municipal affairs

file, there are a lot of broken promises, and two of the highlights right out of the gate were Kawartha Lakes, the Oak Ridges moraine and now restructuring in Peel region.

If I am a regional chair or a regional politician in Niagara, Durham, Halton or Kitchener-Waterloo, I've got to wonder that if the right person whispers in the Premier's ear or twists his arm, who knows what's going to happen. In the region of Niagara, for example—and a couple of my colleagues are listening to my debate—St. Catharines and Niagara Falls combined have half the population. However, they have far less than half of the representation in the region of Niagara. I would suggest that when Darcy McKeough and Premier Davis were building regional governments in the early 1970s, they wanted to create that balance across municipalities and try to encourage planning across municipalities for the benefit of all constituent municipalities. So if you are from the regions of Niagara, Halton or Durham, when you see a bill like this moving forward that had no consensus, that rejected the facilitator's report, that has within it several broken promises, you must be concerned about when Dalton McGuinty is going to turn his eye to you and start giving you the broken promise treatment.

In fact, recently a municipal councillor in St. Catharines suggested that St. Catharines get more representation on Niagara regional government, fitting with the population. St. Catharines on its own has about a third of Niagara's population, roughly, but I think they have far less than a third of the seats. Maybe this councillor, encouraged by what Dalton McGuinty has done in Peel in betraying his campaign promises, is looking to turn the same trick in the region of Niagara. I know my colleagues from Niagara Centre and Niagara Falls would probably be concerned if St. Catharines had a lot more representation and the other municipalities did not.

No doubt it bothers us in the opposition considerably when Dalton McGuinty so blatantly breaks a promise and goes through such a tortuous dance over a year to all kinds of different positions. As I have said, it bothers the mayor of Brampton; it bothers the mayor of Caledon, who I think had, no doubt, believed the Premier when he told the mayor of Brampton that regional governance was not on his agenda. You know what may have happened? The Premier told one mayor one thing, another mayor another, the third mayor something entirely different, and maybe the regional chair got a fourth story. You don't think Dalton McGuinty would tell four stories? Maybe just three. But I think Dalton McGuinty is telling different stories to different people at different times. It certainly bears it out when you look at the media clippings on this issue and the different positions he has taken.

Mr. Leal: Tim, you're a good speaker.

Mr. Hudak: Well, thanks, and you only have to sit through 15 more minutes of this. But it bothers us, it bothers some of the mayors, and, I have no doubt, the regional councillors in Peel. It bothers our friend from Brampton Centre, the member Mrs. Jeffrey, who is

courageously saying she will stand up and vote against the legislation. You know what? I believe her. I believe she is going to withstand the strong-arm tactics of Don the Crusher guy and David—

Interjection.

Mr. Hudak: Well, the health minister might be sicced on her.

Interjection.

Mr. Hudak: I think Guy Giorno has nothing on David MacNaughton and Don Guy.

Mr. Leal: Remember Toni Skarica?

Mr. Hudak: Well, maybe the member is calling on his partner to be more like Toni Skarica and step down if this bill goes through. I don't know if that is what Peterborough is saying. But if he uses Toni Skarica as an example, when Toni Skarica was upset with restructuring in the Hamilton area, he stepped down, he resigned his seat, and Mr. McMeekin entered the House in the resultant by-election. So maybe Peterborough is saying that.

But I believe that Mrs. Jeffrey, the member from Brampton Centre, will withstand the arm-twisting from Don the Crusher guy and from David—what was my nickname for David?

Interjection: MacNaughton.

Mr. Hudak: MacNaughton, but he had a nickname.

Mr. Leal: Who was in the backroom for Mr. Harris? Who were the backroom folks?

Mr. Hudak: The member from Peterborough is talking about the backroom folks. I heard that the vaunted and highly respected Polish Hammer from Port Colborne, Bob Lipinski, may be called in to speak with the member from Brampton Centre; certainly a very effective individual, a vivacious individual—Bob “the Hammer” Lipinski, from Port Colborne in my riding. He may be called in to speak with Mrs. Jeffrey, but I think she is going to stand her ground and vote with the people of Brampton against this bill.

I do find it curious that the other two Brampton members have been so quiet on a bill that has been a regular feature of the media, of discussion and certainly a prominent issue for municipal leaders from Brampton and from Peel region. The member Mr. Dhillon from Brampton West—Mississauga had a curious position. He said in the April 15 edition of the Brampton Guardian that he would like to see more of Justice Adams's report implemented. Justice Adams, a very respected, esteemed individual, had made nine recommendations, and the member from Brampton West—Mississauga said, “I would like to see more of Justice Adams's recommendations implemented.” Well, we heard from the minister. He's implementing eight of nine. That's what he says. What is the ninth of nine? Well, that was more seats for Caledon, not the model he's brought forward. So if Brampton West—Mississauga truly feels that more of Justice Adams's report should be implemented, he has no choice but to vote against this bill. If he wants nine of nine, if he wants better than eight of nine, if he wants more of Justice Adams implemented,

he has no choice but to stand in his place, stand on his word, and to vote against this bill.

Maybe, as I fear, he is trying to audition to be in cabinet and is exhibiting his talent of saying one thing and doing another. I do believe that if Brampton West–Mississauga wanted to prove his merits as a cabinet minister to Dalton McGuinty, he would say and do something else. But I don't think he is that kind of individual. If he says he wants to see more of Justice Adams implemented, he has no choice but to vote against this bill, because the government is committed to eight out of nine, and more would be nine out of nine, which is a different model for members on Peel council than the minister has brought forward. So that is Brampton West–Mississauga.

A more curious position comes from Bramalea–Gore–Malton–Springdale representative, Mr. Kular.

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Mr. Dunlop: Where does he stand on anything?

Mr. Hudak: My friend from Simcoe asked where he stands on the issue. I have no doubt that Mrs. Jeffrey, who sits beside him, is working on him to stand up for his constituents from Brampton and also vote against this bill. But he had a very, very curious response. I don't know if my colleague from Peterborough saw it in the Brampton Guardian.

Mr. Leal: No, I just read the Examiner.

Mr. Hudak: OK. I don't know if the Peterborough Examiner reported on it, but in the Brampton Guardian story, the member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton–Springdale, Mr. Kular, basically said that he has written a secret letter to the Premier.

Interjection.

Mr. Hudak: You've seen that. I'm getting a reaction from the gallery.

He has written a secret letter to the Premier about where he stands on a very important issue in Peel region. The member has written a secret letter. I think it's terrible that his constituents, to find out where he stands, might have to go through the freedom of information process to FOI that letter, spend money on it, months to go through red tape, just to find out where the local member stands. Come on.

Mr. Yakabuski: It's a secret. He wants it to be a secret between him and Dalton.

Mr. Leal: Toni Skarica sent a secret letter to the Premier—

Mr. Hudak: Toni Skarica told you where he stood on the issue.

The member for Brampton Centre says where she stands on the issue. My former colleague from Stoney Creek, Mr. Clark, said where he stood on the issue of Hamilton restructuring. They were brave. They stood on the issue, spoke their minds in the assembly and voted against the government, and Mrs. Jeffrey seems inclined to vote against her government on this. But how could the member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton–Springdale say with any kind of straight face that he has written a secret letter to the Premier, I assume describing his position, but

it's going to stay a secret? I can't rationalize that. Maybe Mr. MacNaughton and Mr. Guy have been working on him and they're going to keep that letter secret. But it can't stay a secret forever.

I do look forward and I do hope that all the members from Brampton—I know that one of the Mississauga members was speaking earlier—will pay the respect their constituents are due by standing in this assembly and telling us what they feel about the legislation and how they're going to vote. No secret letters, no telling the paper that it's all in a secret letter that will be revealed in the archives decades down the road; stand in the assembly and tell your constituents directly where you stand on this issue. I don't think that's asking for too much.

In Dalton McGuinty's list of promises, promise 152 and promise 160 said basically the same thing. In promise 152 and promise 160—I think you guys had to memorize these things—Dalton McGuinty promised Ontarians that MPPs would be free to criticize and vote against government legislation unless it was a campaign promise. Right?

This restructuring in Peel was not a campaign promise. We looked in that encyclopaedia of campaign promises and couldn't find it anywhere. So clearly, if Dalton McGuinty is a man of his word—and that is often in doubt—if he turns over a new leaf and wants to be a man of his word, there will be no repercussions for the members from Brampton for standing up for their constituents and voting against this bill.

Mr. Yakabuski: Perhaps they'd like a secret vote.

Mr. Hudak: So the member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton–Springdale has no cause, no worry. If Dalton McGuinty is good for his word, that secret letter stating where he stands could be made public.

My friend from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke says that maybe they want a secret ballot vote. Well, that's not the way things work in the assembly. The constituents want to see those members from Brampton stand in the assembly and say where they stand on this issue and give constructive criticism on how to improve the bill.

The municipal affairs minister does have the right under legislation to work with municipalities, even to legislate changes in municipal structures. I would suggest that that right be exercised in an open, honest and transparent way, that if the minister and the Premier believed that restructuring in Peel region was the right thing to do, they could have at least campaigned on it or, while in office, said early on that that was the game plan and outlined a process that the mayors and councillors could buy into, have their say and there would be a fair, open and honest outcome.

Sadly, that is totally lacking. I have no doubt that, when other municipal leaders in regions other than Peel or counties other than Peel region look at this and see this haphazard, erratic approach, rife with broken promises, they're going to get nervous as to what is next on Dalton McGuinty's hit list.

If Dalton McGuinty felt this way, if his members from Mississauga were so convincing, he should have put it in his campaign platform, or at the very least outlined a process that had buy-in, that sought to achieve a consensus, and then acted upon it. This flip-flopping on the issue ultimately does more harm than good in terms of the municipalities' and municipal leaders' trust in their Premier and trust in the Ministry of Municipal Affairs.

The signals that have been sent through this Peel restructuring issue, by Kawartha Lakes, where the Premier broke one of his campaign promises around amalgamation—Fort Erie, the municipality in which I was born and raised in the riding of Erie—Lincoln, wrote to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing that they were not satisfied with Fort Erie's role in regional government and asked the minister if they could put on the ballot a question about governance in the region of Niagara and Fort Erie's role, as a local municipality, in that governance structure. Minister Gerretsen wrote back to the town with haste. It didn't take months, half a year and a series of different positions. Minister Gerretsen wrote back to the town of Fort Erie, to Mayor Redekop, and said, "The province doesn't get involved with these types of local decisions." The minister said, "Those types of representation issues on council's restructuring at the regions should be left to the region and the municipalities to work out a consensus" approach. That is what he told the town of Fort Erie. He made the same promises in Peel region, but he broke those promises. He did. He twisted, into several policy contortions, all kinds of promises and broke them.

What does that say to municipalities? Let alone what it says to municipal leaders in Peel region, what does it say to municipal leaders in Peterborough or Fort Erie or Halton region? The minister says, "One thing is good for you, but something else entirely different is good for other municipalities." What kind of signal does that inconsistency, that breaking of promises, send to other municipalities?

I mentioned a city councillor in St. Catharines already starting the ball rolling about restructuring in Niagara and getting St. Catharines more seats.

Hon. Mr. Bradley: Hear, hear; a good idea.

Mr. Hudak: Maybe the Minister of Tourism likes that; he represents St. Catharines. But I tell you, I don't think those in Wainfleet, Pelham, Grimsby, Fort Erie, Port Colborne, West Lincoln and Lincoln are going to be too keen on that.

Hon. Mr. Bradley: It's good for St. Catharines.

Mr. Hudak: It's good for St. Catharines.

The question is, is this change under Bill 186 to governance in Peel region, this restructuring initiative, good for the municipalities in that area? It is taking up time in the Legislature. It is taking up time at Peel council, it's taking up time here in the Legislature, and I do hope we'll have a committee examine this thoroughly in Peel region. But there are other issues we look forward to discussing here at the provincial level: How will you balance the books? How will you get the ballooning

provincial deficit under control? How will you ensure that this new health tax actually results in improved health care services? My observation is that waiting lists for health care services are getting longer, not shorter. There's a seriously flawed greenbelt that seems to be based more on political science than on environmental science, a new municipal funding formula that takes \$47 million out of transfers to municipalities—

Mr. Wilkinson: So say the people who don't have grade 8 math.

Mr. Hudak: —as the member very well knows, hitting hardest in 2006, when municipal leaders will find out. I know the member for Perth—Middlesex is an intelligent individual who is often very careful to say, "It's for this year that we're giving a little extra money." He never talks about what he has done to Stratford councillors, never talks about what he has done to Perth, never talks about Middlesex, what those municipal councillors will have to go through in 2006. I think the member for Perth—Middlesex has been caught out; he's so anxious to get into cabinet, so anxious to get the keys to a cabinet member's limousine, that he has sold out Perth, has sold out Middlesex. He is not interested in defending the taxpayers of Stratford, who face increased taxes because of this municipal restructuring cost. He is more interested in getting into cabinet. That is his choice, but it's regrettable for Perth—Middlesex.

2020

I find Dalton McGuinty's leadership on this issue, Bill 186, highly regrettable. He has taken so many different policy positions on this and has broken his word. He has broken his word to mayors, to municipal councillors and regional councillors in Peel region. He says one thing and he does another, and he has no answers that I have heard about what will happen with a potentially deadlocked region of Peel. As I said, he has potentially turned what is one of the more efficient regions in the province into a model itself of Dalton McGuinty: indecisive, deadlocked and dithering.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr. Prue: It's always a pleasure to listen to the member from Erie—Lincoln. I may not always agree, but he says it very eloquently and he always has his facts.

He talked a lot—over the hour—about broken promises, and I think the biggest promise that has been broken here is the promise that the Premier made to Mayor Fennell of Brampton. I again quote what she had to say: "This Premier gave me his word there would be no restructuring in Peel.... This Premier gave me his word that governance was not on his government's agenda. I want to believe that this Premier's word is gold, not coal."

This debate we're having tonight is a very unfortunate one, certainly not one that any of us in this room could have anticipated as little as two or three weeks ago, prior to it being introduced in this House. In fact, there were denials that anything was happening right until the day before. The telltale way that I always know that government legislation is coming, whether it be this

government or the previous government, is to open up the pages of the Toronto newspapers and see the leaked word two, three, or four days in advance of what the government is planning. That is, in fact, where this information comes from. They know it's a trial balloon. They want to judge reaction. I guess, from the reaction in the *Globe and Mail* and later in the *Toronto Star*, the minister felt it was safe to put his foot there and to go where he ought not to have gone.

I'll have much more to say about that in my hour, but I want to commend the member from Erie–Lincoln for at least having the courage to tell the truth the way he sees it.

Hon. Mr. Bradley: I'm delighted to see all our guests who are here today. It's always interesting how brave certain members of the House are when Hazel McCallion isn't here to watch. If she's here sitting in the gallery, they're not nearly as brave as when she isn't. I've watched that over the years. It's just an observation I make: that the same speeches are not given when Hazel is up in the gallery as when she is not in the gallery. I'm not talking about the merits of the bill but just the style and the bravery of all members of the House when Hazel is in the House or not in the House.

I don't recall—maybe my friend Norm Sterling will tell me about this—that the municipal changes made in Victoria–Haliburton were in the Tory plans or platform. I don't recall that the city of Toronto was in the Conservative platform. I don't remember that being in the platform—not a lot of advertising.

I see that Guy Giorno, who ran the government, or at least the backrooms of the government, when the Conservatives were in power, now says it was a mistake to amalgamate Toronto. He was one of the strong members of the backroom at that time. I remember when so many people in the city of Toronto, from right across Metropolitan Toronto, made pleas to the government against amalgamation. Despite all those protestations, despite the petitions and so on, what we had, of course, was Toronto forced into amalgamation.

It is always interesting to hear a member of the former government say that somebody else is not fulfilling a commitment or a promise. One I remember so very well, and I know that my friend from Lanark–Carleton will also remember, was the Premier saying, "Certainly, Robert; I can guarantee you, it is not my plan to close hospitals," and over 30 hospitals closed in the province of Ontario.

Mr. Sterling: I remember the 1987 platform of the Liberal government, promising new hospitals, and none were built.

At any rate, this bill is about Brampton, Peel, Mississauga and the town of Caledon. One of the things that is most distasteful about this bill is that the people sitting up there represent local and regional government. They have not had a debate on this issue. They have not had a debate on the Adams report. It has not yet been in front of Peel regional council. There has been no debate within their own local communities on the Adams report.

We have the Liberal government of Ontario dictating to the people of the region of Peel how their government is going to go forward—a government that has been pretty successful over the last 30 years. This structure has been in place for 30 years, and all of a sudden they're going to change the road map. They're going to give control to the city of Mississauga, because they're going to appoint 12 of 24 councillors who have already indicated that they are going to appoint the regional chair and carry the council. That's what this is all about.

I plead to the government: Stop this bill now. Let the regional council of Peel have their say on the Adams report. Report back to the government of Ontario and then go forward. When the local community has their opportunity to have public input, when the local politicians have their say about what they think their municipal government should do in the future, then you will have some legitimacy in terms of bringing legislation forward.

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay): I've been watching this debate from my office while doing some work, and I think the government has to reflect a little. Two of the three municipalities are here with us tonight. They're obviously not happy with the decision the government has made. Simply put, Mr. Adams came forward with a recommendation that you didn't follow. You've institutionalized Mississauga always having a majority on the regional council of Peel. What the judge has recommended and what others are saying is that at this point it looks like the growth within the communities of Caledon and Brampton is rising to the point that their numbers on that regional council have to go up. I can't understand why the government would take a position, all of a sudden, that sides with one community and disregards what the hearings had to say with regard to Mr. Adams's process, that they would just go off and do it on their own.

I have to ask myself, who's afraid of Hazel McCallion? Is it the opposition or is it the government? It would seem to me that my good friend the Minister of Tourism has to ask himself the question. If anybody is afraid of Hazel McCallion around here, it sounds to me as if it's the Liberal government.

I'm just saying that there's a reality here. It's not that anybody said we should take away from Mississauga anything they're not entitled to, but we have to have a mechanism or a formula that says that, as the population grows in other regions, you have to show that in the makeup of the regional council. Can you imagine having a regional council in future where the majority of the population is represented by these two communities but Mississauga controls it? You can't give a community ad infinitum control at the end of the day. You have to do what the population says.

I would say that the best thing for you to do is either, at committee, to accept the recommendations that were made or withdraw this bill altogether.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Erie–Lincoln has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Hudak: I thank my colleagues for their comments and again welcome Mayor Fennell, Mayor Morrison and representatives from across Peel region joining us here in the gallery this evening.

When Bill Davis created the region of Peel 32 years ago, it was done with a foundation that no municipality would dominate the votes. To change that structure is a fundamental change that should not be entered into lightly. But I believe that Dalton McGuinty, with no plan whatsoever to make it work, with no clue how to resolve deadlocks that are likely to occur, with no clear remedy to the real problem of who the next chair may be or how it will be appointed, entered into this while saying one thing to one mayor, something else to another mayor, something else to a third and something entirely different to the regional chair. Dalton McGuinty has at least four faces on this issue, four policy positions. It's a cowardice of leadership and an abandonment of the principles with which it was founded by Bill Davis 32 years ago, and epitomizes Dalton McGuinty's weak leadership and broken promises.

2030

I worry not only about what's going to happen to Peel region in the future—potentially deadlocked and indecisive like Dalton McGuinty—but also about the signal this sends to other municipalities across the province where Dalton McGuinty will not make a decision based on good policy. He will not make a decision on what is in the best interests in the region of Peel as a whole but makes a very, very black-and-white political decision based on the number of votes he thinks he is going to win. There's nothing about good policy, nothing about growth in the region and nothing about good government. It is a failure of leadership, and we look forward to voting against it.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. Prue: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed a privilege again to stand and do the leadoff speech. Before I do so, I would like to thank you for taking my time slot here tonight, in part to allow me to make this speech. I know I helped you this afternoon, but I think you're doing me a bigger favour tonight.

There's so much stuff here. I pondered in my own mind, where do we begin? Where do we start talking about the events that have unfolded in the region of Peel? I think I had to start with an e-mail that was sent—I have a copy here—on July 6, 2004, from Emil Kolb, chair of the region of Peel, to the mayors and members of the regional council of the region of Peel. I would like to quote it in its full context, if I may, because I think this is where everybody's head was at nine months ago, including members of the government. It reads as follows:

“On Wednesday, June 30 at 6:30 p.m., I received a phone call from Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty directly regarding the city of Mississauga's recommendation around governance restructuring.

“His message to me was clear and straightforward: The Premier and his government will not be making any restructuring changes in Peel. Premier McGuinty stated

that his government had not run on an agenda of municipal governance restructuring, and his energies are focused elsewhere—primarily on dealing with the \$6-billion provincial deficit and delivering on campaign commitments to enhance education, reduce waiting times for health care and champion clean power generation.

“The Premier stated that he had already told the mayor of Mississauga this message directly on Wednesday. Any further inquiries to the province on this or related matters will be referred to the office of Finance Minister Greg Sorbara.

“In my view, the province of Ontario has sent a clear signal to all local governments that it is committed to seeking partners who can deliver the best possible services and programs at the best value to the community. I am proud that the region of Peel is highly regarded by the Premier and his government as a valued partner.

“It is my hope that we can move forward from this point progressively to accomplish the many positive initiatives outlined in our strategic plan on behalf of Peel citizens.” It's signed by Emil Kolb, the chairman.

Nine months ago that thought was conveyed, first of all to Hazel McCallion, the mayor of Mississauga, and secondly to the chairman of Peel, Emil Kolb, and through the chairman to the two other mayors and various members of the regional council. All was at peace in Peel; all was working in Peel. Peel continued to show how governance should happen in a mature and expanding economy. Peel has won awards for its governance. Peel appeared, on the face of it, to be acting in a very responsible and mature way, with all the bylaws that were before it and all the decisions of a financial nature that they had to make.

It was true that some people were unhappy. Some people were advocating for change, but that was not the direction of the regional municipality of Peel. That was one isolated mayor's position. And this Premier, nine months ago, said he wanted to have no part of it.

How did we get ourselves into the position we are in today, with two angry mayors sitting here watching the minister unveil his plan? How did we get to a whole turmoil and upset in two municipalities? How did we get half a million people riled up about what is happening here? How did we get a minister who in nine months has gone diametrically opposite to what his own Premier said he was going to do?

If you'll allow me to digress for a few minutes, I looked back to the roots of other government action and what happened in the great amalgamation fiascos of some seven or eight years ago. I ask you to look back to what happened there and you will see that, although this does not involve amalgamation, the exact same scenario is playing itself out over and over again.

In the period leading up to the amalgamation bill being filed in this chamber, not a word was said. Not a word was said during the Conservative election of 1995 that this was even on their agenda. No word was said from the cabinet meetings during the first two years that anything was being contemplated about amalgamation. In

fact, minister after minister after minister, including the one who represented me in what was then the Don Valley East riding, the Honourable Dave Johnson, said it wasn't in the cards. Town hall meetings were held at which it was said, "Amalgamation is not a threat. There are a couple of people advocating for it, but it is certainly not on the radar. It's not what we are going to do."

Then all of a sudden one day, I opened up the Toronto Sun. I don't often open it up, but someone drew my attention to a little, tiny article that said that an idea had been floated around cabinet and was going to be presented within a couple of days, that the province wanted to amalgamate the city of Toronto and all its six municipalities and its regional municipality into one big city. When the person showed that to me, I started to chuckle. After all, who could believe the comic book of journalism, especially a story that was that tiny, that had no facts, no data, no quotes but just "an unnamed source?" The next day there was a similar but much larger article in the Toronto Star, and the day after that in the Globe and Mail. All of a sudden, there was this whole preponderance of media attention being drawn to an idea that had never been on the radar screen before.

Toward the end of that same week, I was summoned, along with the other mayors of the six municipalities and the regional chair, to meet Minister Leach, as he was in those days. We sat in a boardroom in the minister's office, where he laid out to us for the first time that he had a plan. He had a plan that no one had ever heard of, a plan that had never been discussed, a plan that had no paper or background, a plan that had no rationale, but he had a plan. His plan was to amalgamate the six municipalities and the regional government into one big, giant megacity.

I remember getting quite heated and a little bit angry at such hubris, such pomposity that he had. It was unbelievable that he had no plan and no idea why he was doing it. I asked him on that day—I put it in negative terms, because he couldn't tell me why—was it because East York was not a good government? He said, "No, you're a very good government." I asked, was it because we were not democratic enough? He said, "If anything, you're too democratic." I asked whether it was because we had any financial hardships. He said, "No, you have no financial hardships." I asked him, was it because we had just paid down all the debt that had been amassed over a number of years, even though we were in a depression? He said, "No, you are to be commended for that." Then I asked, "Well, why are you doing it?" And do you know what his answer was? He shrugged his shoulders and he looked at me and said, "I don't know, but I've got to do something." That was the answer and that's how we got amalgamated, because he had to do something.

2040

I think this minister is doing the same thing. I look at this. There was no call on the radar. He got a couple of phone calls. An appointment of a learned judge was made. The learned judge gave him advice. He looked at

the advice and he didn't want to follow it, so what does he do? I don't know. He had to do something. The same thing is unfolding—exactly the same.

In the Conservative fiascos of amalgamation—and I say "fiascos" because all of them don't work.

Hon. Mr. Bradley: Oh, you remember?

Mr. Prue: I remember all of them. Toronto doesn't work. Hamilton doesn't work. Ottawa doesn't work. Kawartha Lakes doesn't work. St. Catharines doesn't work. None of them works. They are all boondoggles. What happened with them, though, is that they used it at the same time to effect the downloading. They said, "You're getting a big municipality. We can now download. You're in a better position to pay." They used it to effect the downloading and to further cut taxes.

However, I'm not sure what the rationale is here. The learned judge has told you that the chief problem in Peel is not the restructuring or how many councillors are on the regional municipality or even where they come from. The chief problem is that this municipality, like every other one, has been downloaded. He wasn't given a mandate to look at it, but this is the problem. This is the problem that my friend and colleague with whom, as a former mayor, I sat on all the meetings and whom I like and admire but whom I am not afraid of, Hazel McCallion, has come to this government about and has talked about breaking away from Peel and has talked about restructuring. She is unhappy not about the governance; she is unhappy about the downloading she thinks has come to her municipality, the amounts of money they have to spend and the fact that she believes it's not financially tenable for her to stay there. It is a question not of politics but of finance.

When you get your head around that, you will understand what is happening here. This is a minister who feels he has to do something for no rational reason except perhaps one of finances. I'd like to get on to that in a minute.

You also have here a minister who has done some pretty bizarre things. One of them was Kawartha Lakes. He argued a little bit about what he should or should not have done and tried to blame the Conservatives for amalgamation—and they are to blame for amalgamation. But he is to blame for not de-amalgamating the city of Kawartha Lakes. The Conservatives, the New Democrats and the Liberals all gave their commitment to the people of that city, leading up to the municipal election the year before last, that whatever they decided in a democratic referendum we would carry out.

The people of Kawartha Lakes, knowing all the facts before them, knowing the costs of amalgamation, knowing the costs of de-amalgamation, knowing what would be split up and how it would be split up, democratically, in their wisdom, decided to split that town. They voted, not in a huge majority, but 52% voted to de-amalgamate. Well, I don't know where you come from, but in every election in this country, 52% means you win. I think it meant there too that the people who wanted to de-amalgamate should expect to win.

This minister decided unilaterally, again for no apparent reason—I guess because he has to do something—that he is not going to obey the democratic wishes of the people of that city. He has left them floundering with a structure that does not work for them. He has left them with an economic situation that is untenable. The taxes are going up there enormously. The number of people who sit on the council is not sufficient for people in rural areas. Some of them have to travel 90 to 100 kilometres to attend a local civic meeting. It is simply not a structure that works.

Last week we had a whole discussion about the Association of Municipalities of Ontario when the minister stood up and touted that they are now equal partners, that he is going to consult with them on every single aspect of municipalities. Well, if he was going to do that, why hasn't he consulted with them about this bill? Why hasn't he consulted with them about this unilateral and unfair action in which he has gone against the recommendations of his own judge, his own appointee? He has not consulted with AMO. He has not paid them any mind. I suggest that he has not even—and I'm going to deal with this a little later—followed the laws of the province of Ontario, which set out quite clearly in the Municipal Act how one facilitates the kind of change he has unilaterally done. He has not done anything in that regard to follow the Municipal Act of this province.

The mayors are justifiably mad—or angry; I shouldn't say they're mad; I should use the correct word. They are justifiably angry. I gave a couple of these quotations earlier, but I would like to give them again, just to show you how angry people can be.

The first one was March 31, Mayor Fennell to Minister Gerretsen:

"I would ask for your personal assurance, Mr. Minister—before our luncheon meeting on April 7, 2005—that your government does not intend to implement this rumoured Mississauga 2, Brampton 1 proposal. Moreover, I would like your personal assurance—again before our luncheon meeting on April 7, 2005—that your government has not given its approval to any alternative courses of action other than full implementation of Judge Adams's recommendations or maintaining the status quo for governance in the region of Peel."

The same mayor, same day, wrote to Premier McGuinty:

"Dear Mr. Premier:

"As you are also aware, Mr. Premier, Mayor Morrison and I formally objected in writing to the appointment of a provincial facilitator, urging your government to allow Peel's municipalities to develop a local solution within the purpose and intent of the Municipal Act—a public, transparent and open process prescribed in law. Your government chose to circumvent the provisions of the act and both Caledon and Brampton participated in the facilitation process under the direction of Judge Adams and we did so in good faith."

Let's go to another mayor. Let's go to the mayor of the town of Caledon. This is what she had to say when she wrote on April 12 to Premier Dalton McGuinty:

Dear Premier:

"The city of Brampton has made a very compelling argument that their representation should increase as their population grows. They are one of the fastest-developing cities in the nation. Given all that the parties have been through, Brampton deserves to have this issue addressed now"—she's underlined "now"—"in the proposed legislation and not at some future point in time. We simply cannot afford to be continually involved in future governance" issues.

She goes on to say, quite succinctly and correctly:

"Also, Justice Adams identified that the core problem is largely a financial one. Pooling of social service cost across the GTA has exacerbated the financial pressures within Peel. When this matter was brought forward to Minister Gerretsen last week, he indicated that he did not have a mandate to deal with the issue. This is why I am appealing to you directly. I gather Mayor Fennell has requested a meeting with you prior to the bill being introduced and I would strongly encourage you to meet with the parties. We must get this legislation right the first time."

That is what the mayors had to say. That would have been well and good, had they been the only people contemplating this, but I have here a letter from Minister Gerretsen to the town of Fort Erie, and what do you think he told them about breaking away? The opposite. This is what Minister Gerretsen writes to them, almost in the same week. March 4, 2005, Minister Gerretsen writes to Carolyn J. Kett, the town clerk of the town of Fort Erie:

"Dear Ms. Kett"—and this is a really good one, so I want you to pay attention to this little, tiny, short letter:

"Thank you for the opportunity to consider the proposal by the council of the town of Fort Erie to place a question on the next municipal election ballot pertaining to Fort Erie opting out of regional government. I have carefully reviewed the proposal.

"The provincial government's priorities are to strengthen the economy while improving health care for all Ontarians and outcomes for our students. Municipal restructuring is not one of our priorities. We do not support unilateral action on restructuring; we encourage the development of solutions that reflect the input of all affected municipalities.

"The government believes that the best decisions are those made locally and that a local solution can be found to make Niagara region work better for all constituents. I am confident that your local leadership can have constructive discussions with others at regional council leading to positive solutions on local governance and service delivery system issues within the current governance structure.

"John Gerretsen

"Minister."

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I find this appalling. I don't know about the rest of you. All of a sudden the room is silent. Usually I get heckled. I find this appalling because he treats the people in Brampton and Caledon in a much different way than he treats the people in Fort Erie. In Fort Erie, he's not willing to interfere. In Fort Erie, he believes regional government works. In Fort Erie, he says, "Sit down and discuss it among yourselves, and bring the changes you might suggest and we'll look at them." In Brampton, Caledon and Peel he unilaterally says, "I've made my own decision," notwithstanding what the learned justice had to say and notwithstanding the fact that this has never been dealt with in a parliamentary tradition in any of the three councils or in the regional municipality of Peel. It has never been there. It was never suggested by him that it go there. This is diametrically opposed. I do not believe a minister can have two different decisions on two similar municipalities. I know Fort Erie is a smaller town, but it's not significantly smaller than Caledon.

Mr. Hudak: It's 30,000.

Mr. Prue: It's 30,000. It's not significantly different from Caledon, and yet he would treat them diametrically opposite and differently. This shows, I think, the real lack of what is in this bill.

When I look at what the minister has done—he said I used harsh words, and perhaps I did. I try not to use harsh words in here, but I try to make my point as strongly, as passionately and as correctly as I can. I said I was very disappointed in his actions. I am disappointed not only because of the way he has treated this municipality, but I am disappointed in the way he treated Kawartha Lakes and I am disappointed because he treats Fort Erie in a different way yet again.

What has he done in this particular circumstance? The first thing he has done is that he has avoided every single semblance of transparency. There is nothing transparent about what went on here. There was a secret and huddled meeting where the mayors were called together, along with the regional chair and a judge, and they sat down for four days. There was no semblance of transparency, and he avoided every semblance of public participation. The public was not involved; the public was not informed; the public did not know what was going on. The public found out when it was too late. Shades of amalgamation in 1997. The same scenario: Keep it secret, do the dirty, announce it to the paper a couple of days early and see where things fall.

What else didn't he do? He didn't follow the legislation on regional restructuring. I point out to the government opposite, and I hope you have some lawyers listening, that you can find the answer for what you're trying to do with this bill within the confines of section 218 of the Municipal Act. Section 218 of the Municipal Act, an act that is only four years old at this point, sets out how a regional municipality is to be restructured. It's very similar to the advice he gave to the town of Fort Erie. You restructure it by coming toward the regional council, trying to make some consensus, talking among

yourselves and then seeking ministerial direction. That was not followed in this case. In fact, section 218 of the Municipal Act was completely abrogated.

Then we have the unilateral change he made versus the election. He completely changed everything he had promised in the election and everything he had promised in his letters and his phone calls to Emil Kolb, the regional chair, and in his many letters to mayors Fennell and Morrison.

The next point: He ignored the recommendations of the facilitator who was appointed by your own cabinet, who was the choice of the finance minister. In fact, the finance minister is quoted, as late as a couple of weeks ago, telling the various mayors not to worry, that this wasn't even on the radar. A couple of days later, sure it was. His own facilitator, the person he championed, said not to do what you are doing. Your government has chosen and this minister has chosen to ignore the recommendations of the facilitator.

The regional municipality cannot change unless it is authorized by the minister. I don't think there's any question about that. I would like to quote the Minister of Tourism's favourite mayor on what she had to say about this, because she was quite clear when she wrote the Minister of Finance. She knows where things get done around here. She wrote the Minister of Finance on September 9, 2004, and stated as follows:

"Sections 218 and 219 of the Municipal Act, 2001, set out the rules by which municipalities may change the composition of an upper-tier council, the types of changes that can be made and the procedures that must be followed to make these changes." End of first quote.

Second quote: "With regard to the issue of fair representation at regional council based on representation by population, the report adopted by the city of Mississauga council on May 31, 2004, respecting ward boundaries and the process required to redivide the wards and change the size of regional council acknowledges the process set out in sections 218 and 219 of the Municipal Act, 2001."

To quote Hazel again from the same letter: "In accordance with that timetable, input received from the initial distribution will be presented to city council by mid-October, following which the matter will be referred to the region and, in accordance with that procedure, regional council will be requested to pass the necessary resolution by mid-November 2004. The city of Mississauga has in fact taken the steps to meet the processes set out in sections 218 and 219 of the Municipal Act, 2001, as they relate to changing representation on regional council and has informed those impacted of this. This proposal has been presented in a clear and transparent fashion and will be subject to open ... debate in the matter set out in the legislation."

So whether you agree with Hazel's wanting to break away or not, she clearly is a person who understands the act. If only the minister understood the act. If only the minister followed the act as set out by Hazel McCallion, and if only he was as clear and direct and transparent as

that great mayor always is, because you always know where you stand with her, and if you don't know, you'll find out fast enough. From this minister we did not find out any such thing.

The residents got together. The residents are furious out there, you know. The residents, all of them, are furious. I have here the minutes from the council chambers in Brampton, fourth floor, a town hall meeting: "Governance in the Region of Peel." Lots of people were there. The mayor was there. Councillors were there. Ms. Linda Jeffrey was there. Mr. Vic Dhillon, MPP, Brampton West-Mississauga, was there. Staff were present, and a lot of prominent citizens. There were a lot of citizens there. There's a whole list of them here. Every single one that I can see who stood to speak was opposed to what was going on.

Let me get to the end, when some of the more prominent citizens were featured. Let's hear what they had to say, as recorded in the minutes.

First of all, there was the visiting mayor. Mayor Marolyn Morrison of the town of Caledon came forward and put down her comments. She thanked everyone, of course. She wanted them to know that she had attended four meetings with the facilitator and that "Mayor Fennell did an excellent job." She "advised that Caledon council concurs with the facilitator's report." She "indicated that, as she has stated many times before, elected representatives need to get on with the business they were elected to do—taking care of the residents of the region of Peel," and "expressed Caledon's support for the city of Brampton and indicated they will stand by Brampton on this issue as good neighbours do." That's what the mayor of the next municipality came to say.

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Mayor Fennell invited former Premier William Davis, a good representative of Brampton, to hear what he had to say about this fiasco of a bill. "William Davis, former Premier of Ontario, Main Street South, Brampton": It's good to see that he still lives in the same place he lived in when I was a boy. I guess he hasn't moved; good for him.

He "indicated that he didn't attend this meeting to speak; rather he came out to listen." But he "commended the mayor, council and staff on an excellent presentation-entation." He "advised that historically the rationale for regional government was the fundamental principle that no single municipality should have a dominant role in regional government." He "indicated that he believes the challenge facing the mayor and members of council is to convince the provincial government to either"—number one—"implement the facilitator's report or"—number two—"maintain the status quo." The former Premier, who lives in Brampton, did not like your third option, I would suggest to you, and in fact neither does anyone else. He "believes that ultimately the Premier will have the final decision on this issue and ... that consideration [should] be given to communicating this message more aggressively to the province." He said he wants to

continue living in Brampton, but he also wants to continue living as a member of the region of Peel.

Mr. Dhillon, MPP, was there. I don't want to say too much of what he said, because I really don't think he said anything. At the end he "offered assurances that he has listened to what has been said at this meeting and will take the message back and do everything he can to have a decision made soon." Well, you did that. You're having a decision made, literally within about a week of the introduction of the bill. Here we are at second reading, and we're going again on Wednesday. I would suggest that this is a hasty process I could never have possibly imagined.

Last but not least, Linda Jeffrey, the MPP for Brampton Centre, was there. It has been widely quoted in the newspaper that the member for Brampton Centre may have the dubious, although I think honourable, honour of being the first government member in this government, in this Parliament, to actually vote against a piece of legislation from her own government. It has not happened, Mr. Speaker. We have been here 19 months; there has not been a single member stand up to oppose a piece of government legislation. I hope and I wish Ms. Jeffrey, the member from Brampton Centre, all the best, because it will be very, very difficult, and many pressures will be brought to bear from the Premier's office and elsewhere to have her fall in line with this piece of legislation.

Hon. Mr. Bradley: If they bring in a social contract, I'll vote against it.

Mr. Prue: OK.

Things will happen, I am sure, but I think she is resolute, and I believe that because of what she had to say in the Brampton meeting. She "indicated that she had been working on this issue quite extensively." She "provided details on her discussions with the Premier, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and the Minister of Finance with respect to this issue and advised that shortly after her election to Queen's Park she put forward the position to the Premier that governance was not an issue in Brampton." She "commented on the facilitation process and commended Brampton and Caledon on their presentations and participation in this process," and she "advised that she put forward her position on the facilitator's report to the Premier that all of the recommendations be implemented or none of them be implemented." It's not a good thing, I would suggest, as she did, to cherry-pick, pick those which facilitate and help the case that you're trying to build and reject the prominent one which in fact will not make what you're saying come to fruition.

The problem we're having here is that this government chose to ignore most of the recommendations of Justice Adams. Justice Adams wrote a short—it's only eight pages—but poignant and, I would suggest, brilliant little work here. He says a couple of things in this report—and I think all members should read it, especially all government members. There are three quotes that I want to lift from here, because what he is saying is not being followed in this legislation. What he is saying is

diametrically opposed to your government's actions on this issue. What he is saying would help the people of Peel, including the people of Mississauga, and you are bound and determined, I would take from this legislation, to help only the political cause of some of those who live in Mississauga.

He says, "Brampton, however, points to the tremendous distraction of being required to revise boundaries in 2006 to accommodate two additional ward representatives and then having to do that all over again in 2009 for the next three additional regional councillors...." If Brampton is required to wait until 2009 for additional representatives, its current councillors will be without help when most in need. In short, a formula approach to implementing representation which matches growth in population to representation with some precision is said to be not practical. Nevertheless, I also understand Mississauga's objection to the appointment of five additional regional Brampton representatives in 2006 without any qualification.

"Therefore, a solution to this dilemma is to add in 2006 two additional representatives for Mississauga and five additional representatives for Brampton, subject to an agreement between the three municipalities to commit to a weighted vote at the region in 2009 which accords additional weight to the votes of the councillors from Mississauga and Caledon to outweigh or compensate for three of Brampton's additional five representatives. In other words, the weighted vote would create the same effect as if Brampton had eight regional representatives, not 11." He goes on to explain how this is going to work, and it's very simple.

He talks about the process to come to this decision. This is found on page 7: "In other words, the area municipalities within any regional structure must have empathy for each other and work together whether or not one local body has a majority of votes at the regional level. The discussion over these four days of talks, albeit heated and even gut-wrenching at times, exhibited a remarkable capacity by the mayors to work together. The amazing achievements of Peel and Mississauga, for example, over the last 30 years, also confirmed the viability of the existing model provided it is kept current. Brampton and Caledon understand Mississauga's concerns that arise from it being Ontario's third-largest city and its well-deserved reputation for fiscal prudence."

I think what Justice Adams was trying to say was that the regional government in Peel is working. The mayors are three very tough mayors: all women, by coincidence—perhaps not by coincidence. Perhaps this is why it worked. Perhaps that's why the mayors of Caledon and Brampton, even though they were not anxious to go into this process, sat down with their colleagues and with Mayor McCallion and made it work. It was gut-wrenching, as he says. It was tough slugging, but in the end they came to what was a compromise that would work to the benefit of all three cities within the regional municipality of Peel.

Isn't that what sections 218 and 219 of the Municipal Act say is supposed to happen? Isn't that the way it's supposed to work: the negotiations are to take place, the discussion is to take place, the votes are to take place and then, if necessary, the province is supposed to come in and pass the amending legislation to allow for the changes in the regional voting structure? That's what these three mayors have recommended. That's what the judge recommended. The judge was very clear in saying that the weighted votes in Brampton would be allowed, to allow that the municipality, as it gets increased numbers of citizens living within its boundaries, would have increasing influence. They would not have that increasing influence until at least 2009, when those changes take place.

One only has to drive north and west of the city to see the subdivisions, the apartments and the commerce that is flowing into Brampton. It surely and clearly is one of Canada's fastest-growing cities. The justice recognized this. The mayors recognized this. The demographers recognized this. Everybody recognizes this except for Minister Gerretsen, who says that he is not willing to look into the future. He's only willing, quite frankly, to look into the past. He's willing to look and see what the 2001 census accorded Brampton, not what the 2011 census is likely to do. It is in 2011 that this whole thing will fall apart, if it hasn't fallen apart already. This will exacerbate it; this will make it worse. This will, in combination with the downloading, make the regional municipality of Peel different from what it is today. Today it is a model. Today it is a city and a regional municipality that people come from all over the world, I'm sure, to study.

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I remember when I was on the regional municipality of Metropolitan Toronto. It seemed to me that every single night, certainly every single meeting, there were people from all over the world who came to study the regional municipality that worked, where six mayors and 21 regionally elected members—27 in total, plus the chair—all sat down and decided on what was best. Was it parochial? I don't think so. As a mayor of East York, was I parochial about only the things that happened in East York? I don't think so, nor do I think that was true of the mayors of Etobicoke, North York, Toronto, Scarborough or the city of York. It was not a parochial function, any more than I believe that the regional municipality of Peel will sometime break down into its own parochial nature. In fact, the exact opposite has been the case.

I draw your attention to this, if you have one; I don't know whether you do. I'm sure my colleague from Brampton Centre will refer to this in her most eloquent speech on Wednesday, which I'm waiting for. There have been 6,000 votes taken at the Peel regional council in the last 10 years. Of that 6,000, only 93 have been recorded—so we only have the proof of 93 where someone asked to have their vote recorded—and that is 1.5% of all regional votes. In all that period, only two instances of bloc voting took place. One saw Brampton

and Caledon vote together to defeat Mississauga, and the other saw Caledon and Mississauga vote together to defeat Brampton: two votes in 10 years. This is all about this stuff. This is not a problem. You are creating a problem where none exists. You are weighting Mississauga to have extra votes, weighting Mississauga to have half of all the votes, and that is where the problem is going to happen.

I don't know why this government would do this; I haven't the slightest clue. The problem, as I started with, is a financial problem. The problem with all the cities and towns in this province is that they don't get enough money. They do not have enough money, save and except in fast-booming economies. I won't purport to speak for Brampton about whether they have enough money. I guess you never have enough. In boom times, I remember going out to Mississauga, and Mississauga didn't have to raise the taxes for years and years. Hazel was very proud of that, justifiably; she should be. The reason they didn't have to raise the taxes was that new taxes were being created all the time. There was a boom in housing, there was a boom in commerce, there was a boom in factories, there was a boom in the drug industry. It was all being built on virgin farmland. Money was to be made with the new assessments. They rolled merrily along until a couple of years ago, and then we saw what happened to Mississauga.

Mississauga, now being a mature and largely built-out area, no longer has the luxury of these new additional revenues coming in each and every year from housing, from building, so they have unfortunately fallen into the same kind of economic circumstances as all the other large municipal governments in this province. They have the same problem as Toronto or Hamilton or London or Ottawa or Windsor. They have the same problem. Pick the top 10 and they all have the same problem. There isn't room to expand, and once they have expanded and have moved out, then without the economy itself growing, they are forced to go back to their ratepayers and back to their businesses to ask for more money.

The problem happened—and here's where I go back on the Conservatives again—with the downloading exercises of 1996, 1997 and 1998. The municipalities were downloaded to the point where it is singularly impossible for them to pay all the monies they need to pay to keep their municipalities going without running back to the taxpayers for the most regressive form of taxation of all, and that is the property tax on the ratepayers. It is regressive because it's not based on your ability to pay; it's based on the size of your house, how much it is worth, what the mill rate is in the town and how much the municipality needs. You can be a retired person or a person who has recently lost their employment or a person who has recently arrived in Canada and whose entire savings went into buying a house but who has no job, and all those people will pay the same taxes as a multimillionaire if their house is identical or nearly identical. It is a regressive form of

taxation that desperately needs looking at, but I will leave that for another day.

The municipalities have been downloaded. In Peel, they got a double whammy. In Peel, they have the good fortune—or, some would say, the misfortune—of living next to Toronto. In Toronto, the social welfare, all of the social experiment that goes on in this magnificent city, costs money. When the province downloaded a large portion of that responsibility to the municipality, they got howls and howls of rage from Toronto. We argued, and successfully—I was one of the “we” then—that we couldn't afford it, that it was unfair, that it was not meant that this money should come from the property taxpayer. It was not fair that the costs for welfare, for social programs, for daycare, for all of those socially necessary things that happen in the city of Toronto and in municipalities across the province should be borne by the taxpayers of Toronto alone, because we were a regional centre.

If someone was unemployed, a lot of them came to Toronto. If someone was looking for social housing, they came to Toronto. If they needed specialized services through the provincial government, its agencies or its NGOs, they came to Toronto. If they needed specialized medicine, the best hospitals were in Toronto. People come to this region for a lot of very poignant and important reasons. It was beyond the ability of the taxpayers of this city to pay for all that, and therefore the Conservatives, in their wisdom, said, “You're right.” It was the first time they ever said we were right, but we were. They decided then that they were going to get money from other municipalities. Well, they downloaded again on Peel. They downloaded again on York and on Durham. They said, “Large portions of the money you raise from your local taxpayers will be funnelled down to Toronto to pay for social programs.”

Judge Adams had a little bit to say about that. It's pretty good; it's on page 6. Judge Adams says: “The relatively stable municipal property tax is not the appropriate revenue source for program costs which fluctuate with the provincial and national economy. Strikingly, Ontario continues as the only province to require municipalities to contribute towards social assistance”—the only one.

If you wonder about the problems that Mayor McCallion is having in Mississauga, it's because there isn't the money she once had. She is the head of a mature city that has built out to its borders. There isn't much chance of anything else happening except going up, if she wants to start building large condominiums, which in fact is what is happening in downtown Mississauga today. Even as we speak, I'm sure the cranes are still operating and the workers are putting up brick. I'm sure that is happening; that continues apace. But there isn't enough money. Then she and the other mayors see what is happening to their money: \$60 million flows down to the city of Toronto to pay for social costs, a phenomenon that does not occur in Montreal or Vancouver or Halifax or Winnipeg or any other large city in this country that

also has the same problems. They all have people flowing into the city for a variety of social or health or cultural reasons, people who often do not have sufficient money and who are looking for housing or a plethora of other government-funded initiatives.

They can't continue, and that's what caused the fight. Instead of the minister looking to remedy what is wrong—and what is wrong is the funding formula for the cities; what is wrong is that we are asking more from the cities than they are able to do; what is wrong is to continue the download of the previous government as if it didn't happen at all. The members opposite, when they were on this side of the House—and I remember, because I sat over there and they were all sitting here—fought long and hard and vociferously to try to end the download. Now that you're in government, you tinker around the edges. The minister is tinkering around the edges and actually creating harm, I would suggest, to the people of Peel. I'd like, Mr. Speaker, with your permission, to get on to what some of that harm is.

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Harm: Number one, they have set the stage for further conflict, because the bar has now been set. The minister himself said here tonight that when Brampton's population goes up, the changes will be made. The next mini-census will happen in 2006—next year. What if the mini-census shows that there are 100,000 more people in Brampton—which it probably will—since the last one? Does that mean the bar has changed? Does that mean Brampton is going to get—I'm sure they're going to be running down here for extra representatives, and there's no plan. Is the mayor of Mississauga, whoever that person might be—and I hope Hazel is the mayor till she's 100; if anyone deserves it, she deserves it—going to turn around and say, “No, we just inked a deal last year”? That's exactly what I think is going to happen. There is going to be further and further conflict, because this government, on this issue and perhaps on others as well, has no plan.

Justice Adams gave a perfectly rational plan here. Justice Adams was giving the extra members, but was waiting for them until the year 2009. This allowed for them to be there, to understand and to contribute, but not to vote until 2009, when they would become fully functional. This would give some four years for the current regional government to suss it out, to figure it out, to understand it, and in the elections of 2009 they would have a new and, I would suggest, more rational plan to follow.

It is quite clear that Justice Adams could see from the reports, from the demography, from the building boom, from everything that is happening, that Brampton is increasing by leaps and bounds, both in terms of its pecuniary assets and the number of people who live there. Instead, this minister has preferred, for some unfathomable reason—and I go back to Mr. Leach—to say, “I have to do something.” He doesn't know why; he just feels that he has to do something. He is following in

the worst traditions of former Minister Leach and former Premier Harris.

I have no idea. He is following the traditions of not being democratic, of not being transparent, of not listening, of ignoring expert advice and just doing it because he can. That's what I see here: a minister doing this because he can; not because he needs to, not because he has to, not because he's being forced to, but simply because he can. There is no rationale that I heard here tonight, either from him or from his parliamentary assistant, the member from Scarborough Centre, that in any way makes sense to me.

I ask you as well to think about a scenario. Everyone will say this can't happen. I know the government side is going to say it can't happen. But suppose you push this bill through. Suppose you have the votes to do it and this passes second reading. It goes to committee and you listen to 500 people tell you what a bad idea it is, but you do it anyway. Suppose all of that happens. Suppose it comes back for third reading and it passes, and the Lieutenant Governor is called down and signs it into law. You're then going to have 12 representatives from Mississauga, seven from Brampton and five from Caledon, and you are going to have what is called a hung jury.

If it has never been tied up before, it's because it was collegial. It was never tied up before because they never saw themselves as people bound to a certain municipality, looking out for the interests of their own individual municipality. But I will tell you that, with the minister's actions, all of that is going to change. People from Mississauga are going to say, “I'm from Mississauga,” people from Brampton are going to say, “I'm from Brampton,” and people from Caledon, by heck, are going to say, “I'm from Caledon,” and you're going to see regional and voting blocs that never existed before and should not exist now. That is what you've done here. And when that happens, and I can see it now, whether it's 2006 or 2009 or 2012, whatever the year is when the vote takes place for a regional chair, it's going to be a tie vote; it's going to be 12-12. And what happens then? Your bill doesn't deal with it at all. Your bill does not contemplate what happens with a 12-12 vote. The only thing that is going to happen—

Interjection.

Mr. Prue: —and Mr. Duguid has figured it out; good for you—is that they'll do what every other municipality does. Every other municipality that has a hung vote does the same thing: They come back for appointment to the Lieutenant Governor in Council. You come back to the cabinet, and the cabinet of the day, whoever that might be, chooses your regional representative. Isn't that great? Isn't that great for democracy? You polarize the situation, and then you come back to cabinet and cabinet saves the day by picking one side versus the other, one appointee versus the other, or a third one who wasn't even contemplated for the job when it began. That's what this says.

Section 3 of your bill actually sets this out. Section 3, for those who may have read it, or chose to not read it, says, “Nothing in section 1 limits the power of the regional municipality to change the composition of its council under section 218 of the Municipal Act, 2001 for any regular election after 2006, if the necessary regulation were made under subsection 218(6) of that act.”

What does that mean for the people here? What does it mean for the people of the three municipalities in the regional municipality of Peel? It’s pretty simple what it means. It means that in the future they are going to require a triple majority. They’ll have to have a majority of each of the cities; they’ll have to have a majority on Peel council. You are hamstringing them by this very bill. You are making it impossible for this mature, vibrant regional municipality to continue to exist. If your plan is to destroy it, then you’re doing a good job. I didn’t see that this was your plan at the outset. I don’t know whether somebody has a Machiavellian chess sense, where they can see 10 or 15 moves in advance. But if you do, this is precisely where you are headed. You are asking for a triple majority; you are asking to make it almost literally impossible. The people of this regional municipality, once you do the deed in this bill, will not have an opportunity for 20 years, mark me, to change how their regional municipality works.

I can see it now. I can see several scenarios: One, if I’m government, I’ll undo all of this; two, if you’re government again, you’ll say, “You know, we made a mistake, but let’s look at it some more. We promise not to interfere in this municipality for a while, but maybe another one.” Or if they’re in government, who knows? They’ll download some more stuff on them. But in any event, two out of three scenarios look pretty sad.

For those people who are here tonight, I commend them for sitting through what has probably been a pretty difficult two and a half hours for them, to hear the minister say what he had to say; to hear the parliamentary assistant and some of the people, in comment, say what they had to say about this particular bill; to listen to how you believe you have done everything right, although

you’ve done everything contrary to the laws of this province, the laws that have been promulgated and in place for many, many years; to say that you consulted when they know you didn’t consult; to say that you are transparent and open with citizens when you have not been. That is what they are seeing here tonight.

I am asking the members to listen very carefully, not just to me because I’m in opposition—and I know you very seldom do that, even when I speak wisely and sagely, I’ve been told. It doesn’t really matter, because your minds are made up. But I’m asking you on this bill not to have your minds made up. I’m asking you to listen also to what the member from Brampton Centre is going to say. She is the one who is going to bear the brunt of this. She is the one who is at the heartbeat of it. She is there. She knows what the issue is. Listen to Finance Minister Sorbara, who just two weeks ago said that this wasn’t even on the radar. He is the same one, if you go back to Emil Kolb, whom I quoted earlier, who was in charge of this whole thing at the beginning. Do not listen to the machinations of the minister. On this issue, as in Kawartha Lakes, he is very clearly wrong.

We have an obligation to all the people of this province, but especially to the people in the affected municipalities, to do the right thing. The right thing is very simple: You either make all the changes that the learned justice put forward and plan for the future, or you make no changes at all. Even if no changes are made, the municipalities and the people who live there will be better off than with what you’re doing.

It is often said that you oppose legislation if it’s wrong, but if it doesn’t hurt anyone then it doesn’t matter; you can feel free to go with it. But this does hurt a number of Ontarians very deeply. They have come out in huge numbers in Brampton to voice their concerns. A number of them are here tonight and have stayed till nearly 9:30 to listen. I think you need to listen to them.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 9:30 of the clock, this House is adjourned until 1:30 of the clock, Tuesday, April 26.

The House adjourned at 2130.

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Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

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