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(Hansard)**

Tuesday 26 April 2005

Mardi 26 avril 2005

Speaker
Honourable Alvin Curling

Président
L'honorable Alvin Curling

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 26 April 2005

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 26 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

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 25, 2005, on the motion for second reading of 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 Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): When this House last debated this bill, Mr. Prue had the floor. He had concluded his remarks, so we now go into questions and comments with respect to the member for Beaches–East York's presentation.

Mr. Brad Duguid (Scarborough Centre): Speaking to the comments last night of both the member from Beaches–East York as well as the comments made by the official opposition, there was a lot of anti-government rhetoric in the official opposition's comments—not so much the member from Beaches–East York; I think he spoke more or less to bill. The one issue that both of them touched on was the concern about the potential for a deadlock of council. So I want to speak a little bit to that.

That's something that can happen in any council. Councils can be deadlocked on different issues. You can have 50% of council supporting one thing and 50% not supporting it. Councils have to then come to a consensus. In this case, no one municipality is going to have a majority, no one municipality is going to be able to rule. I think that that's a good thing. It means that representatives of all three communities are going to have to reach a consensus on matters, such as the appointment of a chair. I think that will lead to a chair who is not parochial for any one particular community. You're not going to end up with a chair who's going to be pro-Mississauga or pro-Brampton or pro-Caledon; you're going to end up with a chair who is suitable to all of them combined, somebody who thinks of the whole region, rather than one particular part of the region.

I think that's important. I think that's something that's going to lead to a continuation of the good governance we've seen in this particular region. Keep in mind, this is one of the best-run municipalities in the country. It has won awards because of its administration. We think that these changes will just help it continue that good, effective style of management to ensure that, in fact, not one area dominates, but all areas will be encouraged and urged to work together.

We believe this will work and it will work well, and the people of Peel will be well-served by it.

Mr. Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford): I'm certainly pleased to comment on the statements made by the member from Beaches–East York. It's very clear from the information that I have been receiving—I've got letters here from the mayor of the town of Caledon and also from the mayor of Brampton, which were addressed to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing—that they want public hearings on this. They want this to slow down and for there to be public hearings in Brampton and Mississauga. I would think that the government, certainly with people of that stature looking for public hearings, would be listening.

It is very important that this not be rammed through the House. I know that there are only three members from the Brampton area, but the fact of the matter is that they have a government that has broken their promises with respect to their intentions for this area. Quite frankly, they're not looking very good by the fact that they're trying to ram this through. The Mississauga members are happy in terms of what is happening here, but there are two other components of that area: Caledon and Brampton.

Public hearings are going to be something that I think the government is going to have to respond to, they're going to have to commit to. Because if they don't believe in the public hearing process, where is the transparency in this government in terms of hearing views on such an important issue? They have to hold standing committee hearings on this particular bill; otherwise it becomes just a sham and it becomes something that—

Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader): We already agreed to that.

Mr. Tascona: You've got to have standing committee hearings in the areas that are affected, and Brampton and Mississauga are the areas that are affected. You can't have that big city attitude that the member from Scarborough Centre and the House leader are talking about of having public hearings in Toronto and they can all come

here. Certainly we're looking for those public hearings to be in Mississauga and Brampton so the public can be involved.

1850

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay): I must say I want to echo what my good friend from Beaches–East York, the municipal affairs critic for the NDP, said at the beginning of this: Why is the government bringing this bill forward? Is there a hue and cry from Brampton and other communities to do this? No. In fact, it's quite the opposite. Communities are saying, "What is going on here?"

It is very clear that what happened was that Judge Adams, when his commission report came out, gave some recommendations about how Peel council should be restructured as far as representation on that new council, and made adjustments to make sure that as the populations in other communities go up, there is an opportunity to adjust the representation on the council so that council is reflected in the new population of Mississauga and other communities.

So I come back to the point that my good friend from Beaches–East York, Mr. Prue, made: Why is the government doing this? What is this all about? We're basically going to say that if Mississauga ends up being overtaken by the population of the other communities, they will be virtually guaranteed that they will never lose the majority on that council. That's not what democracy is all about. Democracy is supposed to be that those with the most people get the largest amount of representation.

I understand what that's like. I come from northern Ontario. We're 10 members in the north to speak on all of the issues that are important to us in northern Ontario. I don't like it, but I understand that there is a majority of population in southern Ontario and that the south has a larger say. I would love it—if you're going to pass a piece of legislation that says northern Ontario is going to get a majority of seats in the Legislature, I'm going to vote with the government. It would be a wonderful thing because, finally, we in northern Ontario would be able to address a number of issues that are important to us.

So I say to the government, hey, if you're going to do this for Mississauga, there's a whole bunch of people in northern Ontario who would love to have this kind of inequity when it comes to representation so that we in northern Ontario can finally get the majority that we deserve in the Legislature and get our agenda through.

Hon. Christopher Bentley (Minister of Labour): I am delighted to stand and address this issue, and specifically address the comments of the member from Beaches–East York.

Let me begin by saying that these regional representation issues are often the most difficult, because they bring to light issues of global significance along with the local issues. No community wants to lose its local autonomy, but regionally, they realize that they must act together in order to properly meet the challenges that face the province of Ontario.

We in this government, in our caucus, have been blessed to have a lot of great advice by people who do not necessarily always share the same approach to many of these local issues. I must say that on this particular issue we have been blessed to have great advice from the members for Brampton Centre, Mississauga East and Mississauga West, to name just a few. I'd like to say that we will continue listening to their advice, as we will listen to the advice of all the people from the region, including many of those here this evening.

I would like to take some time to acknowledge the presence of Mayor Fennell of Brampton and Councillors Gibson, Hames, Manning, Moore, Miles, Hutton, Callahan and Sprovieri, as well as Mayor Morrison of Caledon. Thank you for your attendance and thank you for sharing your good advice with us.

I would like to say that if there are members from Mississauga up there, I welcome them as well. I don't recognize the standing individual over there; he belongs to a different campaign. But anyway, what is essential in issues such as this is we listen to and—

The Acting Speaker: Thank you very much. I'll move on now. The member for Beaches–East York has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York): I thank those who have commented from Scarborough Centre, from Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford, from Timmins–James Bay, and the Minister of Labour. The member from Scarborough Centre talked about the deadlocked council. Yes, that is very real concern to us, because this bill does not contain a provision for the deadlocked council. We have to fall back to the Municipal Act. I spoke about that yesterday.

What has happened with this bill is that you have taken a perfectly functioning group in Peel, who always got along, who in their entire history only had two bylaws that were contentious, where a block vote taken—once against Mississauga and once for Mississauga—in their entire 10-year history. You have turned them into a group of people who are now deeply divided, who are parochial—

Interjection.

Mr. Prue: Please, you have. You have the mayors here from two of the municipalities, who now feel divided because of what you have done. You have gone against every single dictate that the learned judge had talked about. You have ignored the most important recommendation he made. Sadly, you have polarized the issues.

The member from Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford has talked about public hearings. We agree that there should be public hearings. We think that the public should be broadly consulted—not in this Legislature, not in this building, not in the negotiations that are taking place for one day of hearings in this Legislature. You should be out at least for a couple of weeks in the municipalities to the west of Toronto. You should be out there to listen to the 600 people who jammed the Brampton meetings to say they're opposed. You should listen to Caledon, to the

member from Timmins-James Bay. We're asking for balance and fairness.

To the Minister of Labour, it's well and good to recognize them here. They've been here for two nights. They're sitting in the opposition gallery. They are opposed to you.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mrs. Linda Jeffrey (Brampton Centre): I'd like to share my time with the member from Mississauga West.

This is a bittersweet day for me in these chambers, proud that my mayor and my colleagues are here from Brampton but saddened that they're here today to indicate their dissatisfaction with Bill 186.

In the fall of last year, our government sought the services of a facilitator skilled at assessing and resolving disputes, and ultimately appointed Ontario Superior Court Justice George Adams—

Interruption.

The Acting Speaker: Member for Brampton Centre, would you just take a seat?

I would ask the visitors who are in the gallery to please remain seated during the presentation.

I return to the member for Brampton Centre.

Mrs. Jeffrey: Justice Adams is a well-respected expert in dispute resolution, and he was asked to forge a consensus on the issues of representation and service delivery. He listened, and he considered the merits of each city's case. For those who would like to look at Justice Adams's report, it's going to be on my Web site tomorrow at www.lindajeffrey.ca.

Ultimately, Justice Adams recommended a continuation of a structure that denies any one municipality a majority and suggested a formula for regional representation in Peel that took into account current and future growth in all three municipalities. Justice Adams recommended that, in time for the 2006 election, Brampton's regional representation be increased by five and Mississauga's by two. He also recommended that by 2009 representation in Caledon would be at both their area and regional levels.

Bill 186 proposes that Mississauga gain an additional two seats and Brampton one seat at Peel regional council. This will have a significant impact on Brampton, because Brampton has been steadily investing more and, in return, receiving progressively less say in where and how regional programs and services like roads, policing and garbage are delivered.

For the last 32 years, Brampton taxpayers have been contributing millions of dollars to the cost of regional services and facilities in Mississauga. We've been proud to support our neighbours in Peel when they were in the midst of rapid growth.

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Brampton is currently the fastest-growing city in Canada. We're ranked number one for residential construction and continue to be the fastest-growing city in Peel. Now that Brampton is in the midst of its own rapid growth, it is vital that investments are made in the services and infrastructure in Brampton. Brampton isn't asking the province for special treatment; we're asking

for equitable distribution of representation, as recommended by Justice Adams. Our community isn't looking for a fight; we're asking for fairness.

I want to assure the residents of Brampton Centre that I'm still committed to being part of a Liberal government. When you sent me to Queen's Park in 2003, you gave me a mandate to protect and enhance health care, improve our schools and clean up our environment. We are making significant progress, and I'm so proud that after waiting 30 years, our government is delivering on its promise to bring a new hospital with 608 beds to Brampton. It's the largest construction project in Canada, I'm told.

Yet my constituents also told me that they wanted someone to look out for Brampton and ensure that our voice is heard. As a former city councillor, I understand how our community works and, after reviewing the proposed legislation, I must conclude that it's not in Brampton's best interests. It's my responsibility to my constituents to ensure that their voice is heard at Queen's Park, even when it opposes government legislation.

I'm proud of my government and I continue to support it, yet I'm not afraid to say when a piece of legislation will put my community at serious disadvantage. I've raised my concerns both publicly and privately, and I have not yet received the assurances that I believe are necessary to protect my growing and vibrant community of Brampton. As a result, I will be voting against this legislation.

The Acting Speaker: I think you said you were sharing your time with one of your colleagues. I'll turn now to the member for Mississauga West.

Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West): The bill before us consists of three pages, a mere six short sections, 29 paragraphs. There's actually less to it than meets the eye.

Justice Adams made nine recommendations, and eight were adopted by the government of Ontario. On one point, the government of Ontario disagreed with Justice Adams. Ontario allocates representation based on actual and not forecast population. On this one point, the government of Ontario disagreed with the Adams report.

This bill will enable the cities of Mississauga and Brampton to adjust their ward boundaries in time for the 2006 elections. Let me use an example. My councillor in ward 9 of Mississauga, Pat Saito, represents about as many people in her ward in Mississauga as does the Premier of Prince Edward Island. So in Mississauga we'll go from the nine councillors we had when we were a city of about 300,000 to 11 councillors representing a city of about 700,000.

The equitable part of Bill 186 is that the resolution of Peel region's issues rests with the men and women its municipalities elect. The people who own homes and businesses in Mississauga take no issue with their friends, their family members, their neighbours or even complete strangers in Brampton and in Caledon, and the reverse is also true. The people in our three communities trust their elected representatives to act in their best inter-

ests. It's certainly true on the three municipal councils. Why, I ask, should any different spirit prevail on Peel regional council?

In a region or in any other type of a confederation, one fundamental principle is that the wealthier areas support other areas to raise the common denominator. This is not the case in Peel, and the realignment will help the three cities address that inequity. Caledon's average family income is close to \$84,000. Mississauga's is about \$60,000. Perhaps the redistribution of seats on Peel regional council will enable the three cities to distribute costs more equitably.

Let's look at another inequity. The existing average local representation on the region of Peel council shows that Mississauga averages 68,000 people per councillor, Brampton averages 54,200 and Caledon averages merely 10,200. It costs the city of Mississauga \$32 million per year to deliver services at two levels, rather than one.

Here is a partial list of some of the organizations that have written to support changes in the status quo in Mississauga: the Canadian Polish Congress, the Mississauga Sports Council, the Mississauga Board of Trade, the Serbian Cultural Association of Metropolitan Toronto and Mississauga, Hansa House, the Cypriot Community of Mississauga, and Carassauga.

Right now, Mississauga has 63% of the population and about 49% of the vote. Mississauga contributes 67% of Peel region's budget, with 63% of the population. Each of Mississauga's nine councillors represents more people than the entire city of Caledon. We need to enact Bill 186. We need to do it now. We need two more wards in Mississauga in time for the 2006 elections. It takes time to draw the ward boundaries and to put in place the proper procedures to do it sensibly and equitably.

If we must have the region of Peel, then it should work more effectively. Mississauga is well managed now. So are the other two cities, Brampton and Caledon. With half its regional council being Mississauga councillors, Peel region will still work well. My colleague from Brampton Centre asks for fairness on behalf of the city that she represents so capably. Bill 186 delivers just that. Peel region is only a governance structure. It can and it will evolve with the times. Life will go on.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln): I'm pleased to rise, and I do want to give full compliments to the member for Brampton Centre. I know it's not easy to stand in this place and to vote against your own government. I want to congratulate her on behalf of the opposition for having the courage to stand up on behalf of her own constituents, to come to this place, speak her mind and vote against the bill. I know it's not easy, when you work with the same colleagues every day, to take a different position on an issue. So I do want to say again to the member, congratulations for coming here and speaking your mind, for standing up for your principles and for your constituents.

I do hope as well that the other members for Brampton will similarly rise in this Legislature and use the member for Brampton Centre as a model to fight on behalf of

their constituents. It seems very clear by the attendance in the gallery here tonight, from what we've seen in the Brampton Guardian and what we hear from Brampton, that folks in the Brampton area are very, very concerned and strongly against Bill 186. So it seems only sensible to assume that the member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale and the other member for Brampton, whose riding, I apologize, slips my mind—the member for Brampton West-Mississauga—will similarly rise in the opportunity in this House to oppose this legislation, to reflect the views of their constituents in Brampton and hopefully cause the government not to proceed with this legislation. As you can hear from the opposition side, we similarly have great concerns with this particular bill.

I do believe what it got down to is that the mayor of Mississauga—a very accomplished politician, somebody with great experience and longevity as a result of that skill—has seen a lot of politicians come and go, and I think in Dalton McGuinty, the current Premier of the province of Ontario, she saw an easy mark: a man who would not stand by his promises and a man who would not stand on his principles. As a result, she got Dalton McGuinty to change his mind on several occasions. It shows the strength of the mayor of Mississauga. It doesn't say much—

The Acting Speaker: Thank you. Questions and comments?

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): I have to follow on the comments of the previous speaker to also give some accolades to the member from Brampton Centre. I have to say, reviewing some of the materials that I've looked into in regard to this issue, she has shown herself to be a very courageous member, not only because she's taken this quite unprecedented step, at least in my time here, of standing up against a government that's doing the wrong thing in this particular instance, but also in standing in concert with the community that she represents.

In looking at some of the materials that I have received from the good mayors who are here with us in the gallery tonight, it's very clear that her message is the very same as their message: Don't cherry-pick this report. Don't only choose the things that you think, because of pressure from another force—and we know what that force is, or should I say who that force is? Don't do that. Do what the judge's report said in its entirety, in its fulsome-ness. Implement those recommendations. That is what this member is saying, that is what these mayors are saying, and that is what the judge said.

Judge Adams was very clear in terms of his recommendations. This government had a very easy go of it in terms of doing the right thing by these communities and not getting into the fray that they've gotten into. They didn't learn from the mistakes of the previous government in the way that it bungled and bongled around cherry-picking of the Who Does What commission and how that got implemented at the municipal level. They did the wrong thing then and you guys are doing the wrong thing now.

Congratulations to the member for Brampton Centre for standing up for her community, and shame on the rest of you for not listening to the wise advice of the judge you commissioned to look into this very issue.

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Mr. Duguid: I'm pleased to speak in response to the statements made by the members for Mississauga West and Brampton Centre. I want to thank all members from the Mississauga area, the members for Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale and Brampton West-Mississauga. They've spoken to myself and the minister and others very forcefully on this issue. They've expressed their views on this, and I thank them for that. I want to thank the member for Brampton Centre in particular for expressing her views here today and throughout consideration of these issues.

These are hard issues. When you're talking about allocating representation in a region, no matter what you do, it's difficult. It's very tough to come to terms with it for all involved.

I want to commend the member for Brampton Centre on her tenacity. She's brought forward her perspective forcefully and professionally throughout, and continues to do that. I and all members of caucus support her in her efforts to bring forward her position. We respect her and the position she's taken, but most of us, the majority of us, don't agree with it. It's not out of lack of respect; it's because we feel that the position we've taken is fair and balanced.

We hired Justice Adams not to dictate to us what the decision should be, but to give us advice as to where we should go with this. We considered his advice and, frankly, we accepted and support most of the recommendations he made. However, what we disagree with is the suggestion that we should allocate representation based on future projections of population rather than current population. We just don't feel that's a direction we should be going in.

This legislation is fair and balanced in the approach that it brings. It ensures that it reflects the concept of better representation by population. It will provide much-needed stability to Peel region to help ensure that Peel region council can move forward, turn its full attention to providing the effective services—

The Acting Speaker: Thank you very much. We have time for one last question or comment.

Mr. Tascona: I'm certainly pleased to join in the debate here. Listening to the members across the way, they say they support and admire the member from Brampton Centre, but they're not listening to her. In fact, what they are doing is patronizing her.

The bottom line is, they asked for a report from a respected justice, George Adams, to give them direction in terms of how to deal with this issue. He came up with a solution that everybody bought into, and this government didn't even listen. They're still not listening, because they said the report is not something they're going to follow. They are being pressured by another municipality, which they decided to listen to. Of course, the

members from Mississauga are pleased, because they're not on the spot. Certainly the member from Brampton Centre is on the spot, and she's here. The silence from the other members, from Brampton West-Mississauga and Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale, is deafening. Silence. But we hear from the member from Brampton Centre. She's in a tough spot.

If she decided to resign, who could blame her? She didn't come into this to be lambasted and centred out by her own government with respect to dealing with an issue that will fundamentally change the powers within her own riding. She didn't come into this for that.

Mr. Duguid: You're full of it.

Mr. Tascona: Don't tell me I'm full of it, member for Scarborough Centre. What am I full of, member for Scarborough Centre? You're nothing but a patronizing little politician from Toronto who basically—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order. Would the member please take his seat. I would ask the House to come to order.

I'll return to the member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford.

Mr. Tascona: The member from the opposite side is trying to get me going, but I'm going to listen to the debate because we want to be fair and balanced. That's what it's all about, fair and balanced, isn't it? Is it fair and balanced for the members from Brampton? I hardly think so. It is not fair and balanced.

The Acting Speaker: One of the government members has two minutes to reply.

Mrs. Jeffrey: It is my honour to wrap up this speech and speak for the last time on Bill 186. I thank the member from Erie-Lincoln, Hamilton East, Scarborough Centre and Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford for their comments tonight on this issue. I guess I would like to wrap up by saying that after last night's debate on this issue, my mayor, Mayor Fennell, and Mayor Morrison from Caledon wrote a letter to Minister Gerretsen. They had four points to make, and I would like to say them here in the Legislature because most members won't have seen the letters.

The first one is that the legislation isn't acceptable.

They are respectfully requesting that the public hearings be held in Brampton and Caledon after adequate public notice is given.

They suggest that the legislation is seriously flawed.

And they suggest that the recommendations of Justice Adams should have been followed if there was to be legislation.

I guess the best way to fix this legislation, in my opinion, would be for an amendment to have some kind of trigger or formula that would adjust for population growth. The current legislation, as it stands now, has no opportunity for when my community grows. We know that Brampton will likely be bigger than Mississauga. We expect it to grow to over 600,000, and the current legislation has nothing in it that would allow for that growth. So there needs to be some opportunity for that discussion

or review to occur, and I would hope that when we get to public meetings, that opportunity would exist.

Finally, I would like to quote something that Justice Adams said. He said, finally, that “Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon are not endlessly robust, nor is their relationship.” He said that these important municipalities need the support from the province. I would ask that people give that thought when they cast their vote. It’s important that we do the right thing while we’re in this House.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. John R. Baird (Nepean–Carleton): At the outset of this debate, I want to speak to the member for Brampton Centre, and this is very genuine. I think this is important, that members stand up and represent their ridings. Very few members have the guts and the courage to do that. I would be remiss if I didn’t acknowledge that, and that really should be seen as an element of strength from the government, not an element of weakness. I think our leader, John Tory, has tried emphasize this in recent months, and I think it’s a good thing, whether in government or in opposition. I want to congratulate the member. Being the first one, I can appreciate, is difficult, and I would be the first to condemn someone for not doing it. Good for you. I really mean that sincerely. You have a lot of guts.

This bill has an interesting pedigree. I suppose the difference, for people in Brampton and Caledon—Dalton McGuinty is breaking his promise to you. Why should he treat you any differently than anyone else? Why should he treat you differently than autistic children? Why should he treat you differently than—

The Acting Speaker: I would ask the member for Nepean–Carleton to address his remarks through the Chair.

Mr. Baird: Why should Dalton McGuinty treat these good people from Brampton and Caledon any differently than autistic children? Why should he treat them any differently than middle-class taxpayers? Why should he treat them differently than people who wanted a balanced budget? Why should he treat them differently from people who wanted new provincial money going to child care? I say to the good folks from Brampton and Caledon that Dalton McGuinty is treating them fairly, because he is breaking just as many promises to them as he did to everyone else. I know that’s a terrible thing to say.

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The fact that there is such a big contingent out here from Peel region shows the amount of concern for this bill. Mayor Marolyn Morrison is here from Caledon to express the concerns of her municipality. I know the member for Caledon, the hard-working member for Dufferin–Peel–Wellington–Grey, will be here the next time this bill is debated. He couldn’t be here today, but he will be here to speak to this bill, because I know that it is something that’s very important to that member. Mayor Susan Fennell from Brampton is here to express the concerns of the 420,000 people who live in Brampton.

I find this legislation, Bill 186, to be rather interesting. It contradicts other legislation. The minister of infrastructure brought in this legislation, Places to Grow, which identified Brampton as one of the places to grow, as a place for great expansion and development and homes for folks. This legislation seems to go au contraire to that piece of legislation that we debated earlier.

I would be remiss if I didn’t say that of the regional councillors from Peel, Elaine Moore is here, Gael Miles is here, John Sprovieri is here. John Sprovieri is a good fellow. Is it Sprovieri or—

Interruption.

Mr. Baird: Sprovieri. I think we’re going to hear a lot more about this guy in the coming—

The Acting Speaker: I would remind the member for Nepean–Carleton, you can’t converse with the people in the gallery while you have the floor. I know you know that. I would ask you once again to make your comments through the Chair.

Mr. Baird: I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that John Sprovieri is a man that we’re likely to hear a terrific amount from in the future. I look forward to the chance of working with him in the future.

We also have some city councillors. I don’t think I’ve seen four city councillors visit this place to show their concern by their presence here. We have city councillors Grant Gibson, Sandra Hames and Bob Callahan, who I have to tell you is a former member of provincial Parliament. I know, Speaker, that you would want to recognize the presence in the gallery of Bob Callahan, someone who served his constituency well in this place for many years. I’m not a student of political history, but I think that he had the courage and the guts—I mean, with great respect to the member for Brampton Centre, this fellow had the courage to run in Brampton, I think when the member was William Grenville Davis. Is that not true? Now that is courage and guts, to run against William Grenville Davis in Brampton, let alone anywhere else in Ontario. Of course, he had the good fortune to serve in this place for many years.

We also have city councillor Garnett Manning with us. So you have a terrific delegation, both from Caledon and from the burgeoning metropolis of Brampton, who are here to express their concerns.

Dalton McGuinty said a number of things, and I want to put them on the record because I think it’s worthwhile. This bill is just another example of Dalton McGuinty saying one thing and doing another. The McGuinty Liberals are rather selective when it comes to listening to the demands of municipalities in the province of Ontario when it comes to municipal restructuring. The McGuinty government has failed to listen to numerous municipalities when they were complaining about the greenbelt. I see the member for Erie–Lincoln is here. We have had no better champion of municipalities and municipal authority and local autonomy than the member for Erie–Lincoln. He’s done a lot of hard work, and they failed to listen to the concerns, the reasonable concerns, about the greenbelt legislation when he brought them forward.

This bill makes me uncomfortable because it pits Mississauga against Brampton and Caledon. I had thought that Dalton McGuinty was here to be a uniter, not a divider. That's unfortunate. Perhaps he should look to Mike Harris, who is always trying to bring people together to find a compromise, a solution.

Again, I congratulate—I genuinely mean this. It shouldn't be a big deal, but it is. On municipal restructuring, I know that we dealt with a very difficult issue in my own constituency, so I have a lot of admiration for my colleague opposite.

I wonder, though, how many MPPs do they have in Brampton? Why do we only have one standing up in her place right now? The other members for Brampton—one of them has a good excuse; I'll concede that—are missing in action. We haven't seen them. One of them, Mr. Dhillon, has a good excuse; his wife just had a baby. Good for him. His wife just had a baby, and that's a good excuse. I would be remiss if I didn't say that.

Why did this bill come into play? One member of the Legislature said, "I look at the efforts that [Mississauga] Mayor Hazel McCallion has exerted over the last little while, and I'm frustrated that her bullying and her intimidation tactics appear to have worked."

I've got to tell you that I was elected to this place, and the best political advice I have ever received from a member of this Legislature came from Gerry Phillips, the Chair of Management Board. He said there are three people you don't mess with. You don't mess with Don Cherry, you don't mess with Mel Lastman and you don't mess with Hazel McCallion. That's not bad advice, because it's tough. The mayor of Mississauga, Hazel McCallion, once phoned and threatened to kill me, when I was the Minister of Energy. I think she said something like—

Hon. Mr. Duncan: Along with a whole lot of other people.

Mr. Baird: The member opposite has my private line at his desk, I guess, and still gets calls.

I got this call from this hysterical woman saying to me, "Mr. Minister, I've got a double-barrelled shotgun, it's blazing and it's got your name on it." I said, "Who the heck is this?" Then I looked at the call display, and it said, "City of Mississauga, Mayor's office," and I believe it was Her Worship offering her suggestions as to my energy policy. I know she can exert considerable influence, but it's important that reason prevail, that it's not just that the person who demands the loudest wins; that there be some reason in place.

I read also in the Toronto Star on April 14: "Brampton Mayor Susan Fennell said she isn't sure what to do about the legislation because she's still reeling from the 'heavy-handed, record-breaking speed' of it. 'The Premier specifically said, "Susan, this government did not run on municipal restructuring and we are not interested in restructuring,"' Fennell said." I guess they're on a first-name basis. That was the Brampton mayor, Her Worship Susan Fennell, in the Toronto Star.

Why are we here debating this? I know someone who has visited Peel: Judge Gomery, who is now heading up a public inquiry in Montreal. He visited Peel once. Do you know who Judge Gomery is?

Mr. Bisson: No, tell me.

Mr. Baird: The member wants to know who Judge Gomery is. Judge Gomery is investigating the theft of money from the taxpayers of Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga. He's conducting a public inquiry in Montreal looking into all of the money that was stolen from residents of Brampton, Peel, Caledon and Mississauga. Judge Gomery was once in Peel.

Mr. Bisson: He was in Brampton.

Mr. Baird: He was in Brampton, I'm sure. I'm sure that one of my friends, a regional councillor from Brampton—John, you can tell me that Judge Gomery is investigating the theft of those people in Brampton's money. The Liberal Party of Canada operatives took this money and gave it to their friends, in the guise of national unity. Judge Gomery was in Peel region once. That's where some of that money went. I would be remiss if I didn't put that on the record.

There are a lot of taxpayers from Caledon, Brampton and Mississauga, who work very hard and whose priority is that that money from their taxpayers' dollars should be going toward health care in Brampton, toward health care for residents of Caledon, toward health care in Mississauga. That's where the money should be going, not to the friends of the Liberal Party of Canada in Quebec. I think that's important to put on the record.

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Let's look back to this issue, Mr. Speaker, because I know you want me to get back to the bill. I can see in your eyes that you're wanting to be an encouragement to me.

January 2004: Premier McGuinty states that restructuring is not on the agenda. June 2004: Finance Minister Greg Sorbara confirms that the government has no intention of moving forward with restructuring. These are the same people who said they wouldn't raise your taxes two weeks before the budget, yet they did. I will confess this: They're treating people in Caledon and Brampton fairly, because they said one thing to them and then did another. That's what they did to people in Nepean and Ottawa West. They say one thing before the election and another thing after. I'll tell you, they say one thing after the election and another thing two months later.

The Minister of Education has been getting up in this House and has been bragging that there are going to be no school closures. We look at St. Thomas School in the former city of Nepean, which is being closed under the guise of Minister Kennedy's regulations. They change the school boundaries, so the school population plummets and then, all of a sudden, under the Kennedy rules, they've found the loophole. The Ottawa-Carleton Catholic School Board is a crafty board. They're a very good board. They found the loophole in the Kennedy school closure formula, and now they're trying to close St. Thomas School. I'll tell you, there are a lot of folks in

Nepean who are tremendously concerned about that. I think some of those folks in Nepean who are concerned about the closure of St. Thomas School have friends and relatives in Brampton.

Interjection.

Mr. Baird: I do support equity in education, and I do support people of faith wanting to send their children to religious schools. I had a parent who came to me and said, "My child going to a religious school is important to me. It's important to my values, and it's important to my faith." That person is a Catholic, so they're entitled to taxpayer money for their school, so it's OK, but there are others who might be Baptist or another type of Christian or Jewish, wanting to send their child to a parochial school and—

Mr. Bisson: Buddhist.

Mr. Baird: Buddhist. They might be South Asian; it might be a Sikh school. I support people being able to send their children to a religious school and get some sort of tax credit for that, because I support the multicultural and multi-religious face in our province. I think if a parent takes an interest in their child's education, that's a good thing. The government should want to support parental choice. This government supports choice only when it's their choice. They are pro-choice as long as you take the government's choice.

Mr. Bisson: They chose Gomery, right?

Mr. Baird: Paul Martin chose Justice Gomery, and he's investigating the millions of dollars that were stolen from taxpayers in Canada, stolen right out of municipalities like Peel and communities like Nepean and Ottawa West. Dalton McGuinty has been fighting for the fiscal imbalance. He's a Dalton-come-lately on this issue, I argue, but I'm with him. I think there should be a dialogue. Certainly no Conservative will guarantee that every question will be addressed, but there should be a dialogue on this issue, whether it's immigration, whether it's health care—and I see the Minister of Health is here, diligently working away on behalf of the patients of the province. There should be a dialogue on this issue. No one can say—certainly I can't—that there will be an amicable solution to every issue, but where there's a will, there's a way.

I talked to the Minister of Finance earlier today, and I asked him, as an opposition member, if I could have a briefing on this fiscal month. He said certainly, and I appreciate that. This is not an issue about Dalton McGuinty or the Liberal government, nor was it one about Bob Rae when he brought it up, nor was it one about Mike Harris when he brought it up in one of the finance minister's budgets over the last few years; it's about hospitals and municipalities in this province, which are providing the bulk of services to the people in Ontario, and we hope to get it addressed.

I want to return to the issue of Judge Adams, Mr. Speaker, because I know you want me to. Judge Adams was asked to facilitate and help get to the bottom of this issue, to find out if someone independent could be brought in to find an amicable solution to this. Well, they

threw Judge Adams's recommendations right into the garbage. Cherry-picking: "We'll pick the parts we like and we'll pick the parts we don't like." I don't think that's the way to go.

I want to quote again from a city of Brampton press release: "The Premier gave me his word that there would be no restructuring in Peel." Let me repeat that: "The Premier gave me his word that there would be no restructuring in Peel," said Mayor Fennell.

Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough): How's the membership drive going?

Mr. Baird: Finished. I say to the member for Peterborough, it went well.

I'm going to quote again from this press release: "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 is not the statement of one woman in Brampton. This is the statement of the representative of 420,000 people in Brampton whose face was slapped, who cannot go to the bank on her Premier's word.

On behalf of the people of Ontario, I'm sorry. You should be able to take the Premier of Ontario's word and when he makes a commitment that he'll be honour bound to uphold it. His word should be his bond with the people. But we're here, and that's not the case. We know why, because Linda Jeffrey said in the Toronto Star that it was the efforts of one woman out there doing this. Please don't send me any hate mail, Mayor. To the one mayor who's not here, I don't want any hate mail or any phone calls.

Mr. Delaney: John, it's OK. She's in India.

Mr. Baird: I'm told she's in India. Is she in India?

Interruption.

Mr. Baird: Oh, Tanzania. Thank goodness she's not here, because I would get in trouble.

Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): Why are you not respecting the rules of the House?

Mr. Baird: Here we have the Minister of Health preaching the rules of this place, which is rather interesting.

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: You're putting these people in a bad position.

Mr. Baird: I'm not. Are you in a bad position?

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: You're answering back.

Mr. Baird: They're not in a bad position at all.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Nepean-Carleton's time has almost elapsed, but I will ask him one more time, please do not engage in conversation with the people visiting us tonight.

Mr. Baird: Speaker, I won't. Don't respond when I talk.

I agree with the representatives who are here, whether it's Mayor Marilyn Morrison of Caledon, who is deeply concerned about the representation of her community and took the time to come to this place to show her concern by her mere presence, as Mayor Fennell did, as did a number of councillors from both Peel and Brampton, to

hope that members will listen. We will demand hearings in Brampton or Caledon on this issue to ensure that their voices are heard.

The Acting Speaker: I must say once again to the people who have joined us tonight to listen to the debate that we are delighted to have you here, but while the debate is going on, you can't talk to any of the members in the House.

Questions and comments?

Mr. Bisson: The problem is that the people here with us tonight would love to be on the floor of the House to debate this. Only one member from the Brampton region is prepared to speak out for them, and then only for five minutes. Representatives from the area being affected are being silent on this legislation, except for Mrs. Jeffrey, who only spoke for five minutes and then gave accolades about being a Liberal and talked about how great that was. They would like to have the opportunity to come in here and speak, so they're frustrated. You have to understand why it is they would like to participate. So I just have to say upfront that there is a certain amount of frustration.

Let's be clear. What's happening here is simply this: There are processes under the Municipal Act currently that would allow the regional municipality of Peel, Mississauga, Caledon and Brampton to deal as they choose with how they grow—not grow, but change the composition of the regional council of Peel. Those mechanisms currently exist under the Municipal Act.

The government decided to appoint Judge Adams to give recommendations to do something different than would have happened if the municipalities themselves had been able to deal with this under the current auspices of Municipal Act. Instead, the government is not even accepting the recommendations of their own appointee. They're turning around and saying, "We're going to do what we want. We're basically going to guarantee that if there's any growth in population in Caledon and Brampton, it won't be recognized on Peel regional council."

I don't understand why the government is taking this position. I expect this government understands the basic ideas of democracy, and that is that as population grows in an area, they get a larger amount of representation, and the population dictates what the representation should be.

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Hon. Mr. Duncan: I listened attentively to the member from Ottawa, soon to be running federally. Let me just say in summarizing his speech and to paraphrase Churchill, "Never in the history of parliamentary debate has so little been said by so few for so long."

The member failed to address the bill. The member failed to address many issues. Let me remind you that this is an issue of representation by population—pure and simple. Mississauga has 63% of the population, 67% of expenses, 66% of the property tax and 49% of the vote. It will be 12, seven and five, as I understand it, on this restructuring.

I urge my friends from Brampton to be very careful about climbing into bed with these Conservatives. Ask

some former members of council from North York or from Etobicoke or from York East or from Scarborough about their record on municipal governance and holding hands with that provincial government and how gentle they were.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: I'd ask the House to come to order.

Minister of Energy?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: The final insult, in listening to that little diatribe, is the William Osler Health Centre. For eight years that government did nothing. That government refused to respond to the community of Brampton's needs. This government kept its word on William Osler and has committed half a billion dollars to that health centre. This government is doing the right thing on rep by pop. This government did the right thing on William Osler. This government's doing the right thing by Peel region.

Mr. Tascona: I don't know what the House leader was listening to, but I listened very attentively to the member from Nepean–Carleton, who spoke with passion and, on more than one occasion, directly to the people from Caledon and Brampton who are here tonight.

Let's be clear. What's going on here is the old two-step. The bottom line is that they're going to give Mississauga the majority with respect to voting power, but really the next step will be that Mississauga is going to be separated from Brampton and Caledon. That's where we're going. That's what they want. This is the first step. Once this is absorbed, then you're going to find that Mississauga will wonder why they should be part of the region, because they've got the majority of the votes and really they should be separated from it. At that time, the government will hope that will satisfy the people of Brampton and Caledon, because then they could say, "I guess we're not going to be part of this. We don't have to be under Mississauga's rule. We're going to be in a situation where we can be on our own and independent." It's not something that hasn't happened before, separated cities within a county, as the city of Barrie separated from the county of Simcoe, and so has the city of Orillia. That's where we're headed. It's the old two-step.

When the House leader says Brampton wasn't properly represented, with respect, they were properly represented. The members worked very hard for those people, as members worked hard when Liberals represented that area. Brampton has been properly represented over the years by some very good members, starting with William Davis.

I look forward to the response from the member from Nepean–Carleton.

Ms. Horwath: My opinion, having heard from some of other speakers, is that the member from Nepean–Carleton raised some significant issues with regard to Bill 186, particularly the issues around fairness, which does not exist in this bill, and the fact that there is extreme dissatisfaction from the members of Peel region, or let's just say some of the members of Peel region,

about this bill, not only in terms of its content but also in terms of the process by which the government came up with this bill. If that weren't the case, I wouldn't have seen these wonderful people here both tonight and last night, and I wouldn't have heard from Mayor Susan Fennell from Brampton and Mayor Marolyn Morrison from Caledon that they have some serious concerns, which I'm looking forward to dealing with in my own debate later on.

I do have to say that there is a fundamental flaw in this piece of legislation, and it is, once again, that the government has taken it upon itself to get the best advice possible from this retired judge, from this justice, and then gone ahead and not gone through with that advice. So they took the confidence of the people involved in this particular matter and made them think that they were coming up with a solution that was going to be worthwhile for everyone and that was going to consider everyone's needs not only in the future, but also in 2006 and 2009. Let's be clear: That's what this judge did. He didn't talk about just what's happening now, but what's going to be happening as growth occurs in the next three and six years. What did the government choose to do? They chose to cherry-pick those recommendations and thereby lost the confidence of these very bright people from Brampton and Caledon, and I don't blame them.

The Acting Speaker: That concludes the time available for questions and comments. I'll return to the member for Nepean—Carleton.

Mr. Baird: I want to thank the members for Timmins—James Bay and Barrie—Simcoe—Bradford, my good friend the Minister of Energy, and the member for Hamilton East.

The Minister of Energy's comments were rather interesting. He made an argument but didn't refute Dalton McGuinty's promises. He didn't say, "Oh, Dalton McGuinty never said that. You're mistaken. We haven't changed our minds. We haven't flip-flopped. We didn't break any promises." No defence on any of those charges. So, given that the Premier of Ontario faced an indictment for breaking promises in my remarks and the government has failed to put up a defence, I guess he's guilty in absentia, guilty of breaking promises and of not living up to the commitments and not living up to his word.

I hope that when this bill can go to committee—and I'll tell you, no one has fought harder for this bill to go to committee than the member for Dufferin—Peel—Wellington—Grey, who will be here to debate another issue and who certainly has spoken up significantly in caucus and weighed in on this and the concerns. We hope this bill will go to committee. We hope the government will try something new, that they'll listen to the wisdom of the area residents, the wisdom of the member for Brampton Centre, who I want to again congratulate for having the guts to get up, and that's not difficult. I genuinely mean that. That should be something that happens more in this place. We have tried to lead the way on the opposition side, particularly in the last six months, and that sort of

thing should be encouraged more often. I really do think it's important. It will lead to better legislation in this House, and hopefully the government will listen and learn and make this bill a better bill before it comes back for third reading.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

M. Bisson: Je veux prendre cette opportunité, avant de commencer le débat, de reconnaître mes deux amis qui sont ici ce soir, M. et M^{me} Nadeau de Kapuskasing, Ontario. On dit bonjour parce que M. Denis et M^{me} Hélène Nadeau sont les organisateurs du plus grand tournoi d'échecs en Amérique du Nord. On vous demande de vous présenter, puis on vous applaudit.

I was just saying that in the gallery with us tonight are Denis and Hélène Nadeau from Kapuskasing. There's an interesting story here, because this is a story of a small town doing really great, big things. They are the organizers of the most successful chess tournament in Canada and in North America. They've held the largest chess tournament in North America two years running in Kapuskasing, Ontario, as a result of the work that has been done by these two individuals. So we congratulate them.

I put the government on notice: two years from now— not this year but next—Trillium applications, NOHFC applications are coming, because we need to support this program.

Mr. Delaney: You got it.

Mr. Bisson: My good friend the whip says, "You got it." There we go; the grants are in the mail.

Back to the point: I have to speak to the bill, because not only is that the rule of this assembly but, quite frankly, I think we owe it to the people of Peel region. Let's review where we're at. The government, for reasons we can understand to a certain extent, have decided they want to make some changes to the regional council of Peel. Now, some people may disagree with where this government is going. I am one of them. We need to ask ourselves why the government is doing what it is doing now.

1950

Here's the issue. We know the demographics are changing in Toronto and the province overall. A huge number of people are moving into Ontario, locating in the communities of Brampton, Mississauga and Caledon. We know that these places are booming and growing—there's a huge amount of development going on—and services need to be provided by those municipalities to the local citizens. The regional council of Peel deals with many of the issues that are common to the communities affected by the regional council.

Currently, we have a situation where about 50%, just slightly more, of those people on the regional council of Peel are representatives of the city of Mississauga, and the balance are from Brampton and Caledon. That's the current composition of the regional council of Peel. Where we find ourselves is that there is a huge increase in population. As we look at the numbers, we know that the city of Brampton, the city of Mississauga and Cal-

edon are going to increase in the years to come. Where we're at is simply this: The government is institutionalizing in this legislation a situation where, if the population in the communities of Brampton and Caledon were to exceed that of Mississauga, Mississauga would have a majority of the people on the regional council of Peel, making decisions for the region.

You ask yourself, why is the government doing this? Why? I ask you the question. Why would we have a government that says, as Mr. Dalton McGuinty and Mr. Gerretsen, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, are saying, we are going to allow a situation where, if the population of the cities of Brampton and Caledon exceeds that of Mississauga, they will be in the minority on Peel regional council? Why would any government do that?

Speaker, you were here. You remember the debates on the megacity. You remember the debates on the whole issue of amalgamation. One of things the Liberals argued—and I would say it's one reason why some of the Liberals today stood in the last election and were elected as MPPs in their ridings—was that they did not agree with amalgamation, the forced amalgamation by the province, that said, "The province knows best. We're not going to listen to the municipalities through a referendum. We're only going to listen to the government of Ontario and the cabinet by way of decree about what's going to happen in those communities."

We remember well what happened in the city of Toronto, the city of Sudbury, the city of Ottawa, the city of Hamilton and others.

Mr. Pat Hoy (Chatham–Kent Essex): Chatham–Kent.

Mr. Bisson: Chatham–Kent. Oh my God, do we remember what happened in Chatham–Kent. We remember that the residents of those municipalities where there were referendums voted by a huge majority to say no to the amalgamation of their cities. Toronto, East York, all the boroughs and cities that made up what is now the city of Toronto, when it came to a referendum, said by about 75% in a plebiscite vote that they did not want to have amalgamation.

We had the Liberals of the day in opposition to the government. I remember Madame Papatello, Mr. Smitherman, Mr. Levac—I can name them all; those who are in cabinet today—railing on this side of the House at the government imposing its view on what local municipal governments should be like when it comes to representation. I remember that debate, because I was a member of an opposition party that opposed the amalgamation of the city of Toronto, as did my good friend Mr. Smitherman, the Minister of Health, for whom I have great regard.

I want to digress. Mr. Smitherman is a good Minister of Health who responds to a number of local issues across our communities, and I give him credit. However, I can't believe that George Smitherman, of the city of Toronto, who opposed amalgamation, would take a position that says, "We're going to impose the views of

cabinet on the communities in the regional council of Peel." Why would we do that? Why?

Interjection: It's not amalgamation.

Mr. Bisson: Well, it's akin to amalgamation.

Interjection: No, it's not.

Mr. Bisson: Oh, you guys are really good at making debates when it suits your purpose on a particular issue. I remember the debates in this Legislature. The Liberals stood in this House, right over there where the Tories are now, as the official opposition. They railed at the Conservatives and said, "You have to listen to the majority of the people in the city of Toronto and others who have voted by plebiscite to say no to amalgamation." They were terribly upset and held up this House, with New Democrats, during the megacity debate to try to stop the government's forced amalgamation of the city of Toronto and others. Do we remember these guys? Oh man, they were doing all kinds of stuff in here.

So I thought the Liberals had credibility. I said to myself, what the Liberals say in opposition is going to be what they do when they come into government, should they form a government, and they're not going to force on any local municipality what they don't want. I took them at their word. But I look at them now and say, "My, my, what happened?" These Liberals in opposition said, "We believe in local autonomy. We believe in local government. We believe in giving local government the necessary tools. We're going to respect municipalities and we're going to do what's right." Instead, through this legislation they've said that even if the population of the cities of Brampton and Caledon increases above that of Mississauga overall, they have institutionalized a majority for the city of Mississauga on Peel regional council.

That's wrong. If Mississauga has a majority, they deserve a majority on Peel regional council. There's nothing wrong with that. But if Brampton and the other communities together end up with a majority of the population, we need a mechanism that says that the other communities will have control, through a majority, of what happens at Peel regional council.

I go back to what my friend Mr. Bradley, the Minister of Tourism, one of the deans of the Legislature, said yesterday: "Why are you guys afraid of Hazel McCallion?" He kept saying that yesterday. He said that in the House. I sat there and said, "We're afraid of Hazel McCallion? We New Democrats? The Conservatives are afraid of Hazel McCallion?" Who's afraid of Hazel McCallion in this Legislature? It's Dalton McGuinty. It's Mr. Gerretsen. They're trembling in their boots. They're saying, "Hazel, we're going to keep your majority no matter what happens." Poor Dalton—well, never mind "poor Dalton." Poor representatives on Peel regional council of the cities of Caledon and Brampton, who find themselves in the situation that their government is neutering their communities in terms of their ability to have fair representation on regional council. They have sold these members down the river.

Is it likely that a New Democrat will be elected to Peel regional council in the next election? I hope so, but I

know that's an uphill struggle. Who knows? I'm a believer. I'm like the little engine that doesn't stop. I keep on working, hoping it's going to happen. But I recognize that this debate is not about we New Democrats winning seats in those communities in the next election. At the end of the day, if there's going to be a turnover, it will probably end up going to the Tories.

I just say, why would the Liberal government today do something against the basic right of democracy, which is representation by population? Have a mechanism in the bill that says that as the population in these communities changes, there will be a change in representation on Peel regional council, or do what the current Municipal Act says and leave it up to the communities themselves to deal with it at regional council. Instead, they're saying to the members—I couldn't imagine being one of the three Brampton MPPs, being sold out by my own government.

2000

I want to say to my good friends from Kapuskasing—I've been down this road before—that if I were a member of a government that was about to sell out my communities, I know which side I would fall on. "The heck with the government. I'm there to represent the people." These people were here. I say to my friends up there, Monsieur and Madame Nadeau, that when we went through the whole exercise in Kapuskasing in terms of employee ownership of Tembec, which was Kimberly-Clark, I was one of the guys who turned and said to my government, "We're wrong. We have to allow the community an opportunity to restructure." At the end of the day, the people came down here and protested, and myself and Len Wood and Shelley Martel and Howard Hampton and other northern members forced our government into making a decision. We stood up for our communities and we won the day. Kapuskasing survived and thrived; otherwise, it would probably not have been what it is today.

Members from Brampton, where are you? Mrs. Jeffrey, for whom I have great respect, has courage. She's going to stand in this House and vote against the legislation. But I say you've got to do more than vote against the legislation, Mrs. Jeffrey. You have to advocate on behalf of your community, along with your two colleagues from Brampton. You have to go in and talk to your caucus and to cabinet members about not allowing this legislation to go forward and, at the end of the day, defeat this legislation. That's what Shelley Martel, Gilles Bisson, Len Wood, Howard Hampton and—

The Acting Speaker: I would ask the member to make his comments through the Chair and, when he's referring to another member of the House, refer to their riding name or their ministry name, not their surname.

Mr. Bisson: Speaker, thank you for reminding me about that, because sometimes I get carried away, I admit.

The members for those ridings have to do what we did in northern Ontario, and that is to try to convince those people in cabinet and all those people in caucus that this is a bad bill for their communities and that we have to

overturn it. I say to those particular members that it's not good enough to get up for five minutes in the House and give a speech. You've really got to do the work that has to be done to convince your colleagues that this is bad legislation.

The government House leader across the way is a good friend of mine, Mr. Duncan, an honourable member. He loves to read Churchill; I notice that in the House all the time. I say to him, if you brought legislation into this House that gave northern Ontario a majority in this Legislature, as you are doing with the city of Mississauga, should Mississauga's population decrease against both Brampton and Caledon, I would vote for it, I've got to tell you, because it would be a great thing for northern Ontario. But I recognize that there is a principle of representation by population. The number of ridings in this Legislature is based on the number of people in the province. I understand—I don't like it, but I understand and accept it to a certain extent—that northern Ontario's population of about a million is about a tenth of the overall population of the province, so we end up with about a tenth of the representation in this Legislature. Our own act that determines how many representatives are in the Legislature of Ontario bases that on the population of our regions, so northern Ontario, with about 10% or 11% of the population, ends up with about 10% or 11% of the representation in the House. I understand that that's an uphill battle for us in northern Ontario, as it is for other regions—Ottawa, central Ontario, southwestern Ontario and other regions that find themselves in the same situation—but we have accepted that that is a principle of democracy. We need to give in this legislation the same principle in terms of representation to the people who live in Peel region.

I also want to speak to another issue in this bill that I think is a little sad. What you've done, in the way you're structuring the new Peel regional council, sets up a situation where they could end up with a tie vote. If all those people at regional council, including the chair, were to vote in such a way that there was a tie, what do they do if there is a deadlock? According to the member from—I forget his riding; Mr. Duguid—Scarborough Centre, those people on the council would then have to go back and have some more discussion and they would have to try to find some way to break the deadlock. I understand that and respect that, but the current legislation basically says that if no accommodation can be made for a deadlock vote on Peel council, the matter will be referred to the cabinet of Ontario. Why should we end up in a situation where, at the end of the day, the cabinet of Ontario is going to make a decision for the people of Peel? That makes no sense.

It seems to me that a couple of things have to happen. We need to make sure that representation on the council is devised in such a way that it reflects the number of people living in each of the communities. The other thing we have to do is make sure that we don't end up, if at all possible—it might be a little more difficult, but we've got to figure out how to do it—with a clause in the bill

that says cabinet can decide what is best for those communities, given a deadlock on Peel regional council. I say to the government, that's one particular section of the bill that we need to give some thought to.

I come to the last part of this debate, and that is public hearings. It will be interesting to see if the government is prepared to allow this bill to travel to the communities of Brampton during the intersession, after the House rises on June 9.

Mr. Dunlop: No, they won't.

Mr. Bisson: I know where they're going, but traditionally in this House, a government introduces a bill in the spring; the bill is debated at second reading and is referred to committee during the intersession for public hearings. There's ample time for hearings this summer.

We say to the government that this summer you should allow this bill to travel for a couple of days or however many days are necessary to allow the people of Mississauga and Caledon and Brampton, all those who are interested, to speak on this bill so that we, as legislators, make sure to get it right. Will this government have the courage to do what has traditionally been done in this House: finish second reading debate this spring, refer the bill to committee, allow the committee to travel during the intersession this summer to do what it has to do in terms of public hearings, have the bill come back for clause-by-clause in committee to deal with amendments, and then bring the bill back to the House for third reading, at which point we make a decision in this House based on the public hearings?

My guess is that the government House leader is going to ride gunshot on this process. The government House leader is going to say, "We've got to pass this legislation now." I see my good friend Mr. Bill Wrye in the back. They are going to say, in the government House leader's office, "We want second reading now. We want to have public hearings now: one day in Toronto. We're not going to travel. We want third reading this spring." That's rather unfortunate. When you rush legislation through the House and don't allow the public to comment on the legislation before us, I think it does a discredit, especially if the bill is controversial. If the bill is not controversial, there is less need for public hearings.

For example, we have the adoption disclosure bill. I would argue that that has had all kinds of hearings until now and we're probably ready as a House to move forward on it. We don't have as great a need to do public hearings on a bill like that. But on a bill like this, when we know that the councils of two of the three communities being affected by the bill are opposed, it seems to me that there are enough problems in how the bill is seen that we should allow the bill to travel somewhat.

My good friend the whip from the government side probably agrees with me, because he is a pretty decent guy. If the government whip were to run this House, we probably would do a lot better when it comes to getting deals in the House.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr. Delaney: Je veux dire merci à mon collègue de Timmins–James Bay. My colleague from Timmins–James Bay bases his remarks on an assumption that growth in the city of Mississauga is slowing or is even flat, but nothing could be further from the truth. Each year, the city of Mississauga becomes home to 20,000 new people. By this time next year, Mississauga will be more populous than the province of New Brunswick. Brampton is already about the size of Regina and Saskatoon put together. Caledon is five times the size of St. Marys, Ontario, and St. Marys doesn't have regional government.

Mississauga has something in common with the government of Ontario. Ontario chafes with its \$23-billion gap within the Canadian confederation. Mississauga has a \$32-million gap with the region of Peel. Rebalancing the vote to get closer to representation by population is a small first step. Representing the city of Mississauga, I would have wanted much more from any bill changing the status quo in Peel region.

I also want to say something about Mayor Hazel McCallion. We in Mississauga have a mayor who is one of the great civic figures of our time. Mayor McCallion is a mayor who can stand on the same plane as Jean Drapeau of Montreal, Charlotte Whitten of Ottawa, Teddy Kollek of Jerusalem, Willy Brandt of Berlin and Ed Koch of New York. We in Mississauga are proud of Mayor McCallion and prouder still of the debt-free, well-run, well-planned city that grew on her watch. That type of good sense and forward thinking is in part what helps make the region of Peel work on an ongoing basis, and that's part of the benefit to the residents of all three cities of Bill 186.

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Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke): It's a pleasure to speak to Bill 186 this evening. What we've got here is a total disregard for consistency and democracy. Last night I heard the member for Scarborough Centre say that they had to do this because they had to respect representation by population, yet this government has done exactly the opposite in determining that they're going to put 11 seats in northern Ontario. So on one hand, they care about population and on the other hand, they don't. Then when Fort Erie asked for some involvement by the government with regard to realigning their situation, they said, "Sorry, we don't get involved in municipal affairs."

It's all about politics and it's all about numbers. This government will do whatever it thinks is going to assist them from the point of view of politics. It doesn't matter if it's right or wrong or indifferent. They put up their finger and say, "Will this assist us from a political point of view?" That is one heck of a crass way to run the Legislature and bring in legislation in Ontario. They're paying no regard to what is right or wrong. They have no consistency. Whatever they decide in their mind is going to benefit them the most come the next election, that's what they're going to do.

However, people see through that kind of stuff. They expect governments to show consistency. This government is opportunistic, and it is wrong. It has decided, "You know what? We're looking at the numbers and I think this is probably not a bad idea, if we're looking at Mississauga." You know what they're prepared to do? They're prepared to sacrifice a very courageous member from Brampton Centre. They're prepared to throw her to the dogs and say, "You know what? We're going to give up your seat, but we're going to make sure we do what we think is the political thing to win seats in Mississauga."

Ms. Horwath: I was in my office listening to the comments of my colleague the member from Timmins–James Bay, and I have to say that he did a really good job of outlining the issues that are before us in regard to this bill. It's an issue of fundamental democracy, and I think he described that very well when he talked about the structural issues in the restructuring of this particular region.

It was interesting that he raised the whole issue of who's afraid of whom in this process. It reminded me of a famous movie. I think Liz Taylor was the actress who played Virginia Wolf. So "Who's afraid of Hazel McCallion?" is the issue right now. It seems to me that my colleague from Timmins–James Bay was saying that the government is afraid of Hazel McCallion. I think Hazel will be happy to be likened to Liz Taylor in terms of her role in this particular situation.

He also talked about—and I think it was really important—how the process has failed the people of Peel region, or at least a large group of people in Peel region. I think it's fair to say that not only has this failure been in the process and the result of that in regard to what has come so far in this particular bill, but also in terms of the legislative process in the future. It's my understanding that it's not going to be travelling to the communities that are here tonight, but the debate on this bill will be restricted to public meetings in this very location.

The other issue he raised that I thought was really important was not only who is speaking up on behalf of these communities but also how they are speaking up. Everyone has great regard for Ms. Jeffrey on the issue, but the reality is, a five-minute debate on a bill that is so significantly catastrophic for the region of Peel is a serious issue and deserves much more debate from those members—

The Acting Speaker: Thank you very much. Questions and comments?

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: I find myself encouraged to participate in this debate, because I've been listening carefully to honourable members saying awfully outrageous things about a very important democratic principle. The reality is, with the bill that we bring forward, there's an adjustment made which gives the ultimate respect for all of the citizens of Peel region because it's based on the principles of rep by pop.

I strongly support the strong views brought forward—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: I'd ask the House to come to order.

Mr. John O'Toole (Durham): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: If the member speaking could address the inequities in the province of Ontario, I'd be prepared to listen.

The Acting Speaker: I don't hear a point of order. I will give the Minister of Health time to conclude his comment.

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: A helpful intervention from the honourable member best known for shooting his finger at the people of the province of Ontario on the front page of the Toronto Star.

The honourable member from a rural riding wanted to intervene and make the point that our government is committed to making sure that there remains significant representation in northern Ontario, because the size of those communities presents a challenge. There's a strong differential built in already between urban and rural settings but, on the fundamental issue, the numbers have been put forward already, and I find it incredulous that the honourable member who started this discussion would seek to create some similarity between an issue which seeks to adjust the proportion and representation on a council with what that previous government did—

Interjection.

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: I already answered that, but you were too busy heckling elsewhere. Instead—

The Acting Speaker: I would ask the House to come to order once more.

Mr. Bisson: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I ask for unanimous consent to give my friend Mr. Smitherman an extra 30 seconds.

The Acting Speaker: The member has asked for unanimous consent. Is there unanimous consent? I heard a no.

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: I do want to say that the honourable members so willing to give additional time might have just allowed me to have two minutes unfettered to make my points. The point is very simple, but it won't be simple enough for the honourable member from the rump back there. The principle is simple. It is that the people of Peel region, whether they be from Caledon, Brampton or Mississauga, have the right to equal representation. That's what this bill does, and that's why I support it so strenuously.

The Acting Speaker: That concludes the time for questions and comments. The member for Timmins–James Bay.

Mr. Bisson: I think it's rather unfortunate that the government didn't allow the unanimous consent motion to move forward to give an extra 30 seconds. My poor friend Mr. Smitherman had to speak on a dead mike for 30 seconds. It was kind of funny to watch.

Listen, to my good friends the Minister of Health and the member from Mississauga West, I've just got to say, in all respect, you're arguing and saying, "Well, this is all about rep by pop." That's what Judge Adams recommended, if I read the legislation well. Judge Adams said,

“I want to give rep by pop to the area of Peel.” Is this what the government did in the legislation? No. So I say to myself, don't come into the House and all of a sudden pretend it is what it is not, because it is very clear what we've got, and it's not rep by pop.

The issue is, if you look at the population growth within the city of Brampton and the city of Mississauga, it's clear that the increase in Brampton is three times what it is in Mississauga. It's not to say that we should be unfair to Mississauga or to Brampton or vice versa; the issue is we have to have a formula that basically says, at the end of the day, if there's a change in population that says more people move into Brampton, then there's got to be an increase on the regional council of Peel for the people of Brampton. That's what this should be all about, and that's not what the government is doing.

I just think it's rather sad. The reality is, I sat in this House in opposition with honourable members who are now in cabinet who argued with me in opposition that we have to have respect for the local citizens when it comes to decisions made about how their municipal councils operate. That's not what this bill does.

To my good friend the member from Hamilton—

Ms. Horwath: East.

Mr. Bisson: East. I always get ridings wrong. I should never be a Deputy Speaker. Listen, it's hard. We have many members in my caucus, and I get lost with all of them.

Anyway, she makes a good point. Who is afraid of Hazel McCallion at the end of the day? I believe it is the government.

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The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. Tascona: I'm very pleased to speak on this bill. I notice the government didn't put up a speaker for this. But I'm pleased to continue the debate because it's important that this debate be continued.

There's been a lot of talk tonight, but I want to deal with the facts. Before I deal with the facts, I want to thank the Minister of Health for coming up to my riding on Friday. We were dealing with the family health units, which are very important to my riding. I can tell you that it's important in my riding of Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford that we get the health care that we need. We've also added an MRI at Royal Victoria Hospital. I not only represent that area, I also represent the area that covers Southlake Regional Health Centre, which is down by Bradford and Innisfil. I can tell you that whole corridor is very important in terms of the health care that we need. The services that have been provided over the last eight years have been very significant, and we're looking for more services coming up into that area, in particular the cancer care centre.

I just want to say that I'm having a pancake breakfast on Saturday, raising money for the cancer care centre and also Hospice Simcoe. I've been doing this for nine years, and it's very important that we bring attention to that issue.

I want to now deal with Bill 186. This bill was the result of a report that was issued through a government-appointed facilitator. That's what the problem is here. Why does this government keep doing these reports? I'm the critic for the Attorney General. The Attorney General got a report commissioned with respect to paralegals by the law society. That report is gathering dust as we deal with an issue that should be dealt with—the paralegal situation in this province, which I've brought up on a number of occasions. Also the Sharia law report that was commissioned from Marion Boyd, the former Attorney General, is another one gathering dust. We have a report that was issued the other day by LeSage, a respected jurist, with respect to civilian oversight. I suspect that one is going to gather dust too. What's going to happen? Are they going to follow the advice?

What we have here is another respected jurist, George Adams, who was asked to deal with the region of Peel. The Minister of Health is dealing with a point about representation by population. I don't view it that way. Because of the fact that they have reconfigured the representation in an area where the Liberals said they would never tread, what I think we have here is, in effect, annexation. The city of Mississauga is going to be able to annex—they've taken over. They have basically taken over how things are going to be run in the region of Peel. That's not representation by population; it's pure annexation.

We know a little bit about annexation in the county of Simcoe, I can tell you, because we've had a number of those situations happen, whether it's a territorial grab or whether it's just a grab of power. What we have here is a grab of power by one municipality at the expense of two others. They have the power. The exercise is basically an annexation, because the government has given this group the power that they wanted. They really want out territorially, but since the government wouldn't go that far yet—I believe they will; I think they will go territorially far enough to make sure that Mississauga is out because they've basically got one foot out right now—they have given them the power that they need to control their own affairs. That's what they've been whining about. They wanted out, they didn't want to be part of the region, but now they've got the voting power that they need.

You call it as you wish. I view this more as an annexation of Mississauga being able to control the affairs of the region of Peel, without the region of Peel being blown up. They wanted it blown up, but since they couldn't get it blown up, they got the voting power.

This is a serious issue. I'm going to go through this very clearly, because I have spoken a great length with our critic, Tim Hudak, on this issue. Over the past year, Premier McGuinty and his Minister of Municipal Affairs have adopted several different positions on the restructuring of Peel region. Here's the timeline on the shifting position of the McGuinty Liberal government.

First of all, January 2004: Premier McGuinty states Peel restructuring is not on their agenda. June 2004: Finance Minister Greg Sorbara confirms that the govern-

ment has no intention of moving forward with restructuring. Also in June 2004: Premier McGuinty states that his government will not be any making restructuring changes in Peel. August 2004: Minister Gerretsen states Peel restructuring must be based on consensus. October 2004: Minister Gerretsen hires Justice George Adams to mediate a resolution to Peel restructuring. December 2004: Justice Adams delivers a report recommending two more Mississauga regional councillors and five more from Brampton. February 2005: Premier McGuinty promises to abide by Justice Adams's report. April 2005: Minister Gerretsen announces his decision to ignore the Adams report and appoint two Mississauga regional councillors and one from Brampton.

The critic for municipal affairs has questioned where the other members from Brampton stand on this issue. We have other members besides the member from Brampton Centre. We have the member from Brampton West–Mississauga and the other member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton–Springdale. I haven't anything from them.

We heard tonight from the member for Brampton Centre that she's going to vote against this bill. She has the right to vote against it. What is that going to do in terms of dealing with an issue where she was elected to a Liberal government that basically said they were not going to deal with any restructuring in the municipal sector? They criticized our government soundly for any kind of restructuring, yet they get involved in the most fundamental type of restructuring: restructuring the power base within a region. They don't want to take the bold step, which they've been asked to do by the mayor of Mississauga, "Take us out of the region." She has been very clear on that. She wants out of the region of Peel, but they weren't prepared to do that—yet. What they are prepared to do is change the voting structure within the region of Peel to give the city of Mississauga what they want in terms of controlling their own affairs. That's why we're here today, because we are dealing with Bill 186, which will deal with that.

I've got two letters I want to refer to. The first one is dated April 26, 2005. It's written by the mayor of the town of Caledon, Marolyn Morrison, to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, John Gerretsen. It reads this way:

"I would like to take this opportunity to advise you in a clear, concise manner that I do not support the approval of Bill 186 as it is currently drafted.

"I had previously asked to have the opportunity to review the content of the bill prior to its introduction. This was done by way of correspondence, dated April 12. In that letter I had indicated that the city of Brampton had made a very compelling argument that their representation should increase as their population grows. Justice Adams had recommended a form of weighted voting and despite comments made to the contrary this approach exists in a number of two-tier governments in Ontario. Minister, this bill has a number of serious flaws, not the

least of which is an unclear process for the election of the chair.

"I would respectfully request that this current bill not be approved in such a hasty fashion and that standing committee hearings be held.

"I trust that this clarifies my position on the bill, and I look forward to hearing from you with the dates, times and locations of the standing committee hearings."

That's from the mayor of the town of Caledon.

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There are other ways the government could have dealt with this issue. You don't have to go into a bill and not consult with people before you get into the bill. They could have issued—well, they did a report. It's obvious they weren't going to follow the report, because they didn't, yet they said they would. But what we have here is a situation where they could have put out a white paper and said, "OK, here's what we've got planned. We're not going to follow Justice Adams's report. We'll do a white paper, so we'll have a good discussion on this and try to get a consensus before we introduce a bill." But they didn't choose to do that, because the pressure that's being put on them obviously is sufficient for them to introduce a bill.

I've got another letter dated April 26, 2005. This is from the mayor of Brampton, Susan Fennell. It's to the Honourable John Gerretsen, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. It reads as follows:

"Dear Mr. Minister,

"As you know, Mayor Marolyn Morrison and I with respective councillors attended the Legislature last evening for the second reading of your government's restructuring legislation, Bill 186, the Region of Peel Act, 2005." That would have been last night, April 25.

"I want to reiterate, Mr. Minister, that this legislation is, in the opinion of the council of the city of Brampton, unacceptable, fundamentally flawed and must not be enacted by your government.

"While you allude to your government's comprehensive public consultation process in your introductory remarks, I want to remind you that the elected representatives of Peel regional council have never once debated the matter of governance in public. The consultation process you referred to has been non-existent.

"Your government must hold full and open public hearings on this matter in both Brampton and Caledon. Moreover, our citizens must be afforded the courtesy of proper and adequate public notice of these hearings.

"I look forward to your government's recognition of the interests and views of the citizens of Brampton and Caledon."

We're here tonight debating Bill 186, and the Liberal government has put up two speakers: one for five minutes from Brampton Centre and the other one for five minutes, I believe was the member from Mississauga West. They've used 25% of their allocated time to debate this bill tonight. What we heard from the member from Brampton Centre was that she was not going to vote for this bill, yet she supports what her government has done

and believes in her own heart that the government has done good things for Brampton. God bless her. That's the opinion she's got.

The member from Mississauga West is a little bit more cavalier about it, because he knows he's basically got what he needs and he really has no pressure on him. Well, he does have some pressure, because if they don't go along with the mayor of Mississauga, it's reported in the papers that she's going to make sure they get turfed. So they're basically following the party line and the mayor's line.

What have we heard here tonight? I don't think we've heard anything. With respect, we haven't heard from the minister. We can't say under the rules whether someone is here or not, but the fact of the matter is that we haven't heard from him. So we don't know how the Liberals are going to respond to these two mayors about these issues. We don't know what they're going to do on public hearings, but we do know that they're not supportive of this legislation as it's drafted presently. So we don't know what the Liberals are thinking. Quite frankly, I don't believe they're going to change anything in this bill. They've gone this far out on the hook; I think it's a little bit dangerous for them to start treading water and reeling back from where they are, because I don't believe that's where they're going.

What we have here is a situation where you've really got to question and you've really got to feel for the three members from Brampton, because they probably didn't understand what they got into when they got into provincial politics. They're going to have to follow the party line one way or the other, and for them to say, "We're going to vote against this bill," and whatever, what good is that going to do for their region? It's their government that is bringing forth this legislation. It's their government that is fundamentally going to change the power structure within the region of Peel. They've got to wear it. Now, how they choose to wear it is up to them. They can speak out. They can basically decide, "I'm not going to be part of this government any more; I want to be an independent," or they may want to resign. It depends on what principles they feel they should follow. We've seen that in our own government, in terms of issues of regional municipalities and mergers and that. Certain members take certain positions and sometimes they decide to leave provincial politics because they feel strongly enough about that issue. We will have to see how this one plays out.

I'll tell you, if my government tried to put the city of Barrie back into the county of Simcoe, that would not be happening at all, because that's something that I never ran on. I doubt very much that any of these people ran on the issue. Their government came out clear: "We're not getting involved in municipal politics." What are they doing here? They're totally involved in municipal politics, interfering with the process. They're not even allowing the councillors to get involved in the debate, to give them a consensus, because they decided that the report that they asked for didn't meet their needs. So they've misled

the people they were trying to work with. Unlike the reports that I'm dealing with as the Attorney General critic, which are gathering dust, the Adams report didn't just gather dust, it wasn't followed.

We've got a fundamental issue here, because the people of the region of Peel—and I know that area pretty well. I used to practise law in Mississauga and in Brampton with Neil Davis and the firm that I was with there in the late 1980s and early 1990s. I can tell you that it's a great area, but the fact of the matter is, the area has to work together because it's so large and growing. The services they need and the commercial tax base they need to make it work together was thought through, and this fundamental change that they're talking about here is not wanted, other than the fact that it's what Mississauga really wants, or at least it's what their council would appear to want. They want out. This is one way for them to get out.

I think what the Liberals are going to do, if they really feel the heat and they feel they've got to protect the seats in Brampton, is they may say to the city of Brampton and the town of Caledon, "You set up your own structure and we'll let Mississauga out, because you feel that you don't want to work under the system that we're about to put in." The proof will be in the pudding. The fact of the matter is, as the member from Beaches—East York said tonight, how do you deal with a deadlock?

The other point raised by one of the mayors is, how are you going to deal with the election of the chair? The chair is going to be the key position; there is no doubt about it. The fact of the matter is, if the votes go the way they should go, of course the chair is going to be from Mississauga. There is no doubt that the chair is going to be from Mississauga. So it'll sort of work the way the old Metro council used to work, where the representative invariably was from Toronto. Toronto dictated how Metro council would run, and that's the same way it's going to be here: Mississauga will dictate how the region of Peel will run.

The people from Brampton and the people from Caledon are really not going to know, until this really gets evolving, how they're going to be affected. But we do know, from a basic principle, that this is not representation by population. Let's not get carried away in terms of what this government stands for. The critic for democratic renewal has stated very clearly that they're not following rep by pop with respect to northern Ontario when you look at how they are dealing with southern Ontario. It's not representation by population.

What we're dealing with here is a fundamental decision to leave the three members from Brampton out in the cold, having to deal with the basics of how they represent their area. It's not going to be easy because the fact of the matter is this will fundamentally change how the region of Peel will operate.

Of course, the people and the representatives from Brampton and Caledon are here tonight, and they were here last night, because they want some answers. They want to be responded to in terms of what's going to be

done with the issue, but they're not getting any answers. All they're hearing is silence, because the Liberal government is not bringing any speakers, and they're not going to hear from the minister. We don't know what the minister is going to say on this. He spoke last night, but we haven't heard from him today. The letters were drafted today because they were looking for answers. They're not getting any answers out of this debate, because there are no answers to be provided. The decision has been made. There's going to be a fundamental change in the region of Peel. It's short of annexation because they didn't really want to annex anybody; they just wanted to control their own destiny. Now Mississauga can control its own destiny. Even though it's not a territorial separation, it's certainly a separation in the voting structure within the region of Peel, which obviously they are satisfied with at this juncture.

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The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Ms. Horwath: It's my pleasure to make some comments on the debate by the member from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford. I think he did a very adequate job in his initial remarks, talking about the history of this particular issue in regard to what has been happening with the situation in Peel region. He talked quite eloquently about the matter of who will speak up on behalf of the voices that to this point have not received the kind of attention they need to receive in order to get justice for the majority of the people, at least the majority in terms of who is being represented this evening in the chamber.

It's really important to recognize that it's not just a matter of who will stand up and vote against this bill; it's a matter of who will take the time to get up and debate in the House and do the real things that need to be done to motivate a change in the way that the government is thinking about Bill 186. I think that's what is expected of the members who represent this area. I certainly hope, on behalf of the people visiting us in the gallery tonight, that they are going to see some of that representation.

Up until now, we've seen that the government members have already given up one of their opportunities to speak to the bill, which tells a story about their willingness to defend the position they've taken. Why? Because as the member from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford mentioned very clearly in his remarks, this bill has ended up in a situation where it has caved in to the interests of one group.

I'm looking forward to speaking to this bill myself, because it's quite clear that there had been a consensus built, and there had been a trust built in the process that this government actually initiated, only now, at the end of the day, to have a bill tabled in this Legislature that throws out that trust, that throws out that process and that says, "No, we are going to suddenly give more attention to one voice in the process." That is totally inappropriate.

Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East): I'm proud of the region of Peel and the city of Mississauga, as well as the city of Brampton and the town of Caledon. These three areas have grown from small hamlets like the one

that resides in my riding, Cooksville. There is also Streetsville, and a number of other little hamlets that grew into, actually, the third largest city in Ontario, after Ottawa and Toronto.

The region of Peel has also done some marvellous things. It won the National Quality Institute award. It has helped to run the region very efficiently. Just last week we had a chance, through the region and Peel housing, to be able to announce 136 new units of affordable housing in the riding of Mississauga East. That was a great announcement, done through the region.

I'm very happy to see Mayor Morrison and Mayor Fennell. Also, I know that Mayor McCallion is out of the country and was not able to be here tonight.

In regard to Judge Adams's recommendations and moving forward with an evolution, we did implement, and this piece of legislation will be implementing, seven of the eight different points that Judge Adams brought forward.

The member from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford likes to play divisive politics with all of this, but that dinosaur caucus over there wants to live in the past and doesn't want to move forward. Well, do you know what? This party is about moving forward; it's about listening to the people and making sure that their voices are heard. We want to make sure that all voices are heard in the region of Peel—they are being heard—in a very fair and balanced way, something that that previous government failed to do.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark-Carleton): It is amazing to hear a member from Mississauga talk about the history of the region of Peel. As I understand the history of the region of Peel, they have brought forward very, very progressive governments for the region of Peel over the last 30 years on the basis that Mississauga didn't have the hammer in regional council. So the present government goes out to a facilitator or a mediator and they ask Judge Adams to bring forward a report, and the report recommends that Mississauga gets 12 regional councillors, that Brampton gets 10 over a period of time, and Caledon retains their five. What we get in response from the government is very biased and a twist of what Adams recommended. They didn't accept what Adams said at all. They say they accepted seven of eight recommendations, but the most important recommendation is the eighth recommendation or the ninth recommendation or whatever it is.

This government is about a piece of legislation which is going to provide divisive politics to the region of Peel over the next 10 or 15 years. They've coalesced the forces so that the city of Brampton and Caledon are going to be teamed up against Mississauga. Up to now, they have been able to broker this out for the best of all of the region. Now it's not the case.

All I ask is that this government refer the matter to the region of Peel so that the local councillors and the mayor and the local people have a say. Give them their say before you pass this piece of legislation.

The Acting Speaker: We have time for one last question or comment.

Mr. Bisson: On the heels of that, I agree with the dean of the House: It is all about giving the people of the area their say. It's pretty clear. The judge came out with his recommendations. The judge basically said that we need to continue down the road of making sure that we give representation by population when it comes to the composition of the regional council of Peel.

This government, for whatever reason, jumped offside and decided to do their own thing. They just said, "We're not going to listen to the judge in regard to his particular"—not Judge Gomery, by the way; that is a whole other debate that my friend from Ottawa raised, but that's another issue.

Listen, in the commission report, Judge Adams said that we should go down the road of making sure that in the future there is a mechanism to ensure that as Brampton's population increases, there is an increase on the council for the city of Brampton. If you take a look at the population demographics, it's clear. There is almost a 3-to-1 increase in population for Brampton as opposed to what we see in the city of Mississauga. The simple issue is that we need to make sure that we have representation by population.

Now, if the people in the city of Brampton and the town of Caledon were happy with what was going on, would they be sitting here for the last couple of nights? I say to the government members, it's really simple. The majority of the people of the area are upset. They've been having community meetings. They're saying that they want this government to do what is right. The government is not doing so, and we say to ourselves, why not listen to the people? What's wrong in a democracy with listening to what the people have to say? I just say to them: take your time; relax; think about what is going on here; get this debate done at second reading; move the bill off to committee during the intersession; allow in the intersession for public hearings in the communities of Brampton and others; allow the people to have their say, then let's come back here in the fall with committee of the whole and a vote at third reading in order to decide what we should do.

The Acting Speaker: That concludes the time available for questions and comments. I return to the member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford. You have two minutes to sum up.

2050

Mr. Tascona: The fundamental issue here—and everybody knows it—is Mississauga is built out. They are not going to be growing any more; they have built out. This principle of rep by pop doesn't work, because the city of Brampton is the one that is growing.

So when the member from Lanark-Carleton talks about divisive politics over the next 10 to 15 years and about looking at the situation in terms of giving people their say on this issue, this is a fundamental issue that is going to change the region of Peel and the fundamental dynamics of this particular area, which needs to work

together. It has to work together because it's such a large and powerful area of this province. So they need to work together for their services.

So when the government brings out their policy in terms of essentially being against urban growth and Places to Grow, and yet they bring in a policy here in the region of Peel that is counterintuitive and counter to the way this region has been operating, it doesn't make any sense. Because when you've got a community that is built out—and that's the reason why Mayor Hazel McCallion wants out, because she knows that their power within the region is going to decrease. She's taking her chance right now. She knows the time to get out is now, and she's got her way, because the timing was right for her.

This is not good for Caledon and it's not good for Brampton, because it doesn't make any sense to them. They're the growth areas. So what we have here is a government that is not listening. They say that I'm living in the past; they don't even know what the future is, because all they are doing is making this area dysfunctional. It's not going to work and it's divisive.

I agree with the member from Lanark-Carleton: Bring it back to the people and let them make the decision, because they had a consensus before.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Ms. Horwath: A lot of people in tonight's discussion about Bill 186 have referred to Judge Adams and his report. I thought it would be important, in the initial part of my discussion and concerns about this bill tonight, to quote directly from the preamble of his report. I think it clearly indicates the feeling that the people of Caledon and Brampton, and certainly their elected representatives, must be having at this point in time, and that's a feeling of a complete breach of good faith and a complete breach of trust by this government. Unfortunately, this government doesn't have much currency when it comes to issues of good faith and building trust.

However, I thought it would be important to reflect on this particular paragraph because it really does set out what I think were the expectations that were built by this government when they appointed Judge Adams in this process. I'm going to read directly from his report. It says:

"I am pleased to report that the parties participated in intensive problem-solving talks over the course of four days. There was a thorough airing of concerns which revealed both significant differences and common interests. While at the outset of these talks, the differences appeared to be overwhelming the common interests, the good faith discussion which followed allows me to report that a substantial consensus may be forged around the ideas set out below."

It goes on to say that of course it's the responsibility of the minister to then follow up and make sure that this good faith, this trust, this excellent relationship and airing of concerns and hammering out of a consensus be followed up by the government. But unfortunately we see in Bill 186 that no such faith has been followed through on,

no such pact has been honoured by this government. I believe that is why we have seen for the last two nights a number of elected officials and a number of people from the communities of Brampton and Caledon coming forward, so that at least during the debate we're forced to look into their faces and speak to them, as the people who are most interested in this issue.

What is this issue, you might ask? I have a couple of things I wanted to say in terms of what I see as the main issues tied up in this particular bill. An idea has been mentioned many times by members of the opposition and, in fact, by the member from—I can't remember her riding—Brampton, who spoke about the lack of fairness in this particular bill. That is, the bill sets up a situation where it will likely be the case, in more instances than not, that when there is friction at the upper tier in Peel region between the parties, in this model the government is bringing forward, contrary to what was recommended by the good justice, Mississauga will win the day. That issue has been clearly indicated by all the speakers who are concerned about this bill.

It's also really clear to recognize that this is the thin edge of the wedge when it comes to what Mississauga wants. We all know that initially the desire of Mayor McCallion was to separate completely from the region of Peel. When that failed, she then decided it was an opportune time to take advantage of a weak Premier and a weak government to change the way the playing field was organized to her own benefit and the benefit of one of the three municipalities that are part of Peel region. That is one of the most problematic pieces of this legislation.

The fastest-growing, most quickly expanding area of this region, the area of Brampton, is getting short shrift when you look at the way this bill reflects—actually, doesn't reflect—the discussions that took place; the intensive, faith-based discussions. I don't mean "faith-based" in the way we talk about faith and our religious beliefs, but faith in terms of the trust that was supposed to have been built in this process. I can tell you that not only Brampton but Caledon as well are very, very concerned about the way the government has decided to go forward on Bill 186.

A troubling aspect of the government's restructuring of Peel region is that the Premier has specifically told the mayor of Brampton, Susan Fennell, that his "government did not run on municipal restructuring and we are not interested in restructuring." This could be a broken promise. They promised they weren't interested in this, but then, lo and behold, when lots of other issues people are concerned about across this province have not been dealt with, up pops this issue. Bill 186 is all of a sudden not only at the top of the agenda but getting pushed forward by a government whose members will not even get up to speak to the bill, let alone those who are most intimately affected by this bill. A couple of them got up to speak. All kudos to the member from Brampton, who was very blunt in her criticism of the bill and the process. Nonetheless, I don't think it was enough of a protest to

really resonate in terms of what the group of people who are here need to hear from their representative at the provincial level.

It's another example of the Premier promising one thing during an election campaign, promising that amalgamation and all those processes that caused so much angst and anxiety and trouble across the province from the previous government—my municipality was also one that was amalgamated, and I can talk about that a little later on. These people, these municipalities, were promised by the government that that's not something they wanted to get into, not something they were worried about, not something they were going to be bothering with at this point in time. Well, they sure started to bother with it in short order, and I can tell you that the people in the gallery tonight are bothered by it too.

They are bothered by it because the process that was put in place, which was based on a good-faith relationship between the people participating and the facilitator chosen by this government and the terms of reference that were set out by this government, was not adhered to. At the end of the day, this government decided to cherry-pick the recommendations. And guess what? That is the same trouble those guys got into when they were in government and decided to cherry-pick recommendations of the Who Does What committee. Again, I can talk about that a little bit later on. That's what happened, and we ended up with the massive downloading that is causing huge problems across this province to this very day, which the current government can't even address because it's such a nightmare and such a fiscal disaster for municipalities across the province.

2100

Instead of dealing with the compromise that was delivered under the expertise of a facilitator, a former judge, George Adams, the McGuinty government decided to play politics and reward Mississauga by caving in to the demands of Mayor McCallion. Why? Because she helped them to deliver all the seats they now have in the Mississauga area. That is the pure politics of Bill 186. I'll call it what it is. It is the pure politics of why these members will not get up and defend this bill, because God forbid that somebody from these other areas tunes in and hears that they have something to say about this nasty piece of legislation. Lord knows, as members of the opposition have said quite clearly, they're not going to be picking up seats in Brampton or Caledon any time soon and certainly they're going to feel the sting of this legislation in the next provincial election if it happens to pass in its current form.

That's another issue. Will it pass in its current form? It seems to me that the likelihood is that this government is not interested in even debating it at second reading, never mind taking it into the communities where they can actually hear from the people whom they have largely ignored to this point in time. They are not going to take this bill and have public hearings on it. They're not going to go face the people and answer their questions. They are not going to go to Caledon. They're not going to

drive down that long highway and get to Caledon and get to Brampton and talk to the people who are going to be affected by this legislation. Of course they're not. They won't even get their members to speak on the legislation here in the House. No, they're not going to do that. Are they going to come back here and maybe pull some people into this building and have some public hearings here? Maybe.

But at the end of the day, are they going to change the legislation? Absolutely not. How do we know? Because all they could muster was a little five-minute giveaway to the one member on their side who has had the guts to get up and speak against this bill. If we knew they were interested at all in any amendments or any kind of compromise around this bill, then we would hear more voices from that side of the House talking about how there might be some compromise available, but we know that is not happening. They won't even put up members to speak to the bill. So we know this bill is not going to change and in fact is going to get railroaded through. Mark my words.

These mayors and these people from Brampton and Caledon here tonight are going to be sadly disappointed, because they think that by coming here, you people are actually going to listen to them. Goodness knows, we on this side of the House have recognized very clearly that that never happens. Even if you have the most appropriate and meaningful suggestions that would improve legislation brought forward by this government, they don't take it into consideration. In their arrogance, they ignore it and plow forward, and that is a sad, sad state of government.

I was talking a little bit about the member who spoke against this bill. When there are issues specifically relative in a geographical way to the riding or the area that a member represents, I think it's important that that member be given the opportunity to speak to those issues. The member from Brampton Centre certainly did get up and speak. Unfortunately, she was only carved out a short five-minute time to raise all the issues and concerns that this legislation represents for her community.

I thought I would take the opportunity to read into the record a piece of correspondence that we received. It was submitted to us and we were asked to read it, and I shall. It is dated April 25, 2005, addressed to Mr. Kular. It says:

"I read with some interest the notice you posted in the 'Coming Events' of the Brampton Guardian, notifying your constituents of the upcoming town hall meeting. There are two items in particular that struck me as being funny." As an aside, I think she means "funny" in a sarcastic way.

"First, by my calculations, you are approximately one month late. You or a designate should have represented the Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale area back on March 22 when the city of Brampton had their town hall meeting to discuss the governance issue, the very topic you are allegedly wanting to discuss on Wednesday, April 27, 2005. Bill 186, the Regional Municipality of Peel Act, 2005, was introduced on Wednesday, April 13,

with a second reading which was to be held" on "Monday, April 25." As you know, this very evening we are debating this bill. "I fail to see how a governance meeting after the fact will benefit the region of Peel and its citizens. The third and final reading will be close behind, and I honestly don't think any last-ditch attempt by you will derail this legislation, unless it comes from the minister himself. The last time I checked, and correct me if I'm wrong, you represent the people of this BGMS area, and since it is your first term in office, I would have thought you would have made every effort to make an appearance to support your constituents on a topic that is very vital to our community."

That's the first part of this woman's complaint, by the way. This complaint, written to Mr. Kular about the timing and his lack of representation on this issue, which is extremely important in his riding, came from a woman named Christina MacLean, and it was copied to a number of other elected officials in the area. It really does reflect a lot of the comments that have been made this evening, and that is, where is the representation from the members of provincial Parliament who are elected to hear from, to speak for and to represent the interests of their ridings in this Legislature? It's obvious that they're nowhere in sight, and this letter reflects it.

"The second thing I found funny," says Christina MacLean, "was the starting time of the meeting. It's a town hall meeting...."

She goes on to describe how the member was so insensitive about the realities of working life and the second part of the day of labour for women particularly, who go to work and then come home and have to take care of their family and get supper ready and all of that. This member actually put the meeting together for 5:30. This woman is saying that anybody who works and has a family knows you can't get to a meeting by 5:30. At the very earliest, at the very stretch of it, 7 is the earliest anybody can get to a meeting. So not only was this member questioned by his constituent about the timing of the meeting in that he decided to have it a month after all the debate and discussion of this issue, but it was also at a time of day when most constituents would not be able to show up. It really reflects the lack of backbone of the members of this government in regard to defending their actions, particularly in terms of what's going to happen to Brampton and Caledon in the context of Bill 186. People are simply not happy with this legislation, because it doesn't reflect the good-faith process they thought they were getting into when they met with Justice Adams.

There are lots of bad things about this bill, but I thought I should take some time to talk about the other piece of restructuring that is affecting municipalities. I thought I would speak to that, because in fact the good judge speaks about it as well in his report. He speaks about the fact that much of the tension and anxiety and concern entwined with this whole discussion about governance in this region is about the situation of downloading and what it has done to single-tier and

double-tier municipalities. I can tell you, from my own experience, that was a big, huge mistake.

It was a big, huge mistake on several levels, but probably the biggest mistake was that when the previous government set out to do the downloading exercise—and I know this because my own regional chair at the time, regional chairman Terry Cooke, was involved in the Who Does What panel. They undertook a significant examination of who was paying for what at which level, with the whole idea that it was a single taxpayer—at least that's how the bill of goods was sold. At the end of the day, we were all sold another bill of goods which said the entire exercise was going to be revenue-neutral. People may recall that Mr. Cooke, when he came back to Hamilton, discovered that the government of the day—here's the instructive part—decided to cherry-pick the recommendations, as opposed to holus-bolus implement the recommendations of that panel. So what happened? The balance was lost, the discussion was lost, the entire process of culling out who does what and why and for how much was totally destroyed, because the government cherry-picked.

Here we are, a couple of years later, and municipalities are being devastated by downloading to this very day. My municipality, the municipality of Hamilton, at this point is still suffering a minimum \$19-million problem. In fact, if I recall correctly, at the beginning of the downloading process it was closer to \$37 million. After a year or two, with CRF funding and various other things we were able to do, it went down to about \$32 million. At the last check I had, it was at about \$26 million. This is the difference between what was supposed to be revenue-neutral and what in actual fact my city of Hamilton had to absorb in the downloading process.

2110

You know very well that Hamilton keeps coming back to this government now saying, "Fix the mistake. Make our funding work. Invest in cities like you said you were going to. Deal with the problems that the previous government foisted upon us in their wrong-headed downloading process." Alas, we know that this government, instead of dealing with those important issues, is turning around and making the same mistakes that the government before them made in terms of cherry-picking recommendations after going through a great deal of process, a great deal of trust-building, a great deal of commitment that was supposed to have been made and that I think everyone was signing on to when these venerable people showed up to these meetings.

Her Worship Hazel McCallion, Her Worship Mayor Marolyn Morrison, Her Worship Mayor Susan Fennell and Chair Emil Kolb all went into the meetings thinking they were hammering out the deal. They were pushing and pulling and they were compromising. They were, very productively and proactively, trying to hammer out their future in a way that respected the things that were different about them, that understood the things that were going to happen to them all in the future, because they took into consideration time frames of a couple of years

from now and then a couple of years after that. And what did this government do? This government basically said, "We don't care. We're going to do what one player wants to do," and that's what Hazel wants to do. It's all about Hazel.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mrs. Jeffrey: I wanted to compliment the homework that the opposition has done on this bill. Bill 186 is near and dear to my heart in that I have spoken about this possible legislation for the last year. I want to thank the staying power of my council. I know they've sat through many council meetings that were long and protracted. Tonight is like many of those meetings, although not as productive, I'm sure, because there is no motion at the end of it that makes you feel you have the end in sight.

I would like to remind people what Justice Adams said in his report. He reminded us that Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga "are not endlessly robust, nor is their Peel relationship. These ... municipalities need support from the province." He talked about the discussion over the four days of talks. He said they were "heated and even gut-wrenching at times," but that the individuals who participated "exhibited a remarkable capacity by the mayors to work together." He spoke about "The amazing achievements of Peel and Mississauga for example, over the last 30 years," and he wanted to "confirm the viability of the existing model provided it is kept current." He spoke about the fact that Brampton and Caledon have worked very hard with Mississauga to help it be a viable institution, how it needs to grow and needs to change. That's clear. But I don't think this legislation does that. I don't think it addresses those needs.

This justice clearly spent a considerable amount of time looking at the legislation. I'm really pleased that the opposition has taken the time to try to understand it and learn it and challenge us. We can make this legislation better. We have the opportunity, and we still have the time.

Mr. Sterling: This legislation is really not about Hazel McCallion or Susan Fennell or Marolyn Morrison; it's really about the future of a community that has learned to grow together for the past 30 years. Notwithstanding that Brampton and Caledon were in the minority in terms of population but had the majority on council, they used that majority with great wisdom. As I understand it, they never denied Mississauga any kind of regional budget item that would have halted its growth, halted its development, halted its future. As a result of that goodwill, which existed for over 30 years, that is probably what sticks in the craw of those people who have served on municipal government over that period of time and who serve on municipal government now.

When you go into municipal restructuring, it is a very difficult task for the provincial government to do. For instance, in the Ottawa area, where I was involved in terms of municipal restructuring, we had six or seven years of debate with the municipal politicians as to what they thought should be the solution. We had reports; we had advice; we had meetings; we had public meetings;

we listened. Let's give the municipal councillors and regional councillors the opportunity to have their say about the Adams report before we proceed with this legislation.

Mr. Bisson: My good friend the member for Hamilton East makes the point, and I think it's a good one, that downloading really started a lot of where we're at right now. Part of what this is all about is the regional council of Peel trying to find a way for them to be able to deal with some of those realities. So I think those are points well made.

The other thing is that I think she showed in this speech her experience from being on municipal council in Hamilton for a number of years. She understands what the issue is from the perspective of a councillor for the city of Hamilton, and a downtown councillor at that, but also understands basically what it is to live in a regional municipality that is larger than the one you come from, that at the end of the day you have to have mechanisms at your regional council that recognize in the longer run the amount of representation you should have on a regional council based on the population of the community you come from.

What's clear is that what Judge Adams recommended was that there should be representation by population. That's what the recommendation was. For whatever reason, the government—the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Dalton McGuinty, the Premier—decided, "We're not going to pay any attention to the recommendations that were made and we're going to come up with our own formula, whatever it might be." The other communities are standing out here and saying, "What sense does this make? Why is the government doing this? Why would they go against the whole concept of representation by population?"

We know that the population in the area of Brampton and others is growing by three to one compared to what is happening in Mississauga. You have to have some kind of mechanism over the longer term that is going to say to the community, "As your community grows and as the population increases, there will be an offset at the regional council to make sure that the representation on regional council reflects the population in your communities." If Mississauga should go in the end, so be it; it would be the same for them.

Mr. Delaney: I would like to return to the \$32-million gap that the city of Mississauga has with the region of Peel. This bill, by rebalancing representation on the Peel regional council, will enable some long overdue issues to receive consideration by the representatives of the three cities. In Mississauga we look forward to discussion on regional cost-sharing models. Perhaps costs will be allocated on the basis of usage.

My colleague from Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford keeps insisting that Mississauga is, to use his words, built out. Try telling that to the 20,000 people moving into the new neighbourhoods currently under construction in Churchhill south. Try telling that to the people in Mississauga City Centre, where the major difference between the Burnhamthorpe and Hurontario area and Hong Kong is merely

the height of the towers. That is why Mississauga, which is already the safest city in Canada, is also one of Canada's top 100 employers. That is why 57 of Canada's Fortune 500 Canadian head offices are in Mississauga.

Mississauga is well run. That managerial competence is what any region needs and that managerial competence is part of the reason that Peel region has been as successful as it has. It's also part of the reason that Peel region can look forward to continued good management, intelligent co-operation and continued prosperity. If Brampton and Caledon point to their record of achieving consensus on Peel's regional council, I believe there is every reason to assume that 24 regional councillors of goodwill and integrity will act in the best interests of the nearly one million citizens of Peel's three great cities.

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The Acting Speaker: The member for Hamilton East has two minutes to sum up.

Ms. Horwath: I want to start out by going back to front in terms of the comments, by saying that if the member opposite is really interested in dealing with whether it's Mississauga's \$32 million or Hamilton's \$19 million, they better get down to the business of fixing the downloading problem, because that's the real problem of what's happening to municipalities in this province from one end to the other. I want to thank the member from Mississauga West, though, for his comments, as well as the member from Timmins–James Bay, who I think mentioned the issue of downloading and reinforced the fact that that's the problem, and I certainly support that. He also talked about the fact that regional council was the place where some relationship-building and some give and take needed to take place, and I agree with that.

I think it also echoed, as a matter of fact, the member from Lanark–Carleton, who talked about community-building and the history of co-operation and working together that we seem to forget when we talk about the nitty-gritty of what has happened with Bill 186 and the expectations that were dashed for at least two out of three of the communities that participated.

Finally, the member from Brampton Centre spoke with great courage earlier on and again just now, because she also talked about—I think it was a bit of a theme, in terms of questions and comments this time around—it being about the community at the end of the day. It is about doing what's right for communities and making them stronger. If I'm not mistaken, the member from Brampton Centre said something to the effect that she was laying down the gauntlet and asking her government to change a bill that is bad.

I think she said, if I'm not mistaken, that they have the time and the opportunity to do what's right for the communities, to take the time to do something that will build on the strengths that historically these communities bring to their collective relationship. The member from Brampton Centre was challenging her government to do the right thing by these communities, and I only hope they do so.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. Fonseca: What I have to say follows on the lines of my colleague the member for Mississauga West in talking about the great things Mississauga has done, growing into the third-largest city here in Ontario. Mississauga is a city that is well managed, well run and crime-free; it is the number one crime-free city for its size in all of Canada.

Interjection: Who's the mayor?

Mr. Fonseca: The mayor is the great Mayor McCalion, who celebrated her 25th anniversary as mayor of Mississauga last year.

All this has also brought about a great accountability to the region. The region is one, as I was saying, that has looked for efficiencies, but as time goes by, with Mississauga growing from hamlets into a large city, and the same thing happening with Brampton—and we have the town of Caledon—there comes a point where you get to economies of scale, and you have to ask yourself, “What economies of scale are best as you try to find those efficiencies, so that every precious taxpayer dollar can be put into the services that are most needed in the two cities and the town?”

I know the mayor will often bring up regional roads that run through Mississauga. We will have Mississauga plowing out roads up to the regional road. They'll stop, cross over to the other side and continue to plow again rather than just plowing straight through and also doing that regional road and looking at those efficiencies. Why waste that extra money? The taxpayers mention all the time that they don't understand why a city the size of Mississauga, which has its own services in many areas, should not be able to do that work. It's grown to the size where it can do that.

When we look at the region, it also has brought in many high-quality standards that many other regions and municipalities have looked to. I was mentioning the National Quality Institute. They are recipients of the National Quality Institute award, which is very commendable. I think it's the only region ever to have received such an award. That award looks at best practices in government and being able to deliver best practices in education, in police services, in customer service.

One of the great things about the region of Peel is that it definitely focuses on all the people who live in Peel. It's customer-focused; everything is about the customer. When you call the region or you call one of our cities or

the town, you don't wait on hold forever. There's somebody there to answer the phone, to get you the answers you need so you can conduct your life as a private citizen and not be put on hold or be thrown into that black hole of voice mail. These are many of the efficiencies that have been brought to the region.

When we look at the city of Mississauga, in terms of population, it makes up about 63% of the region. That is about 680,000 people. I believe Brampton is hovering in the upper 300,000s and Caledon is around 50,000.

It had been a while since regional council had been looked at. As I said, the previous government wants to live in the past and the dinosaur caucus was not willing to make change. The people of Ontario voted for change, voted for fairness and voted for balance. This is what we are bringing: positive change to all parts of Ontario and making sure that we are listening to the people.

We brought in Judge George Adams to meet with the mayors and hash out a model that would help all as we move forward, something that was positive and constructive. In looking at the report, to my understanding, they'll be implementing eight of the nine recommendations. The only recommendation that was not agreed upon that they wanted to move on was that Judge Adams mentioned giving political representation to population that is not yet there. If those parties over there, the official opposition and the third party, agree, that would be like saying, “Ontario is going to grow by so many millions, so we're going to have another 20 members in here come the next election.” That is just not right, and I know the people of Ontario would not go for that. That is just completely absurd. I don't understand why they would agree with that, but they do.

They could talk to the taxpayers of Ontario and tell them they want more government. They want government that doesn't even represent people. They want government to represent imaginary people. Why don't we just throw in 25 more members here? That's what they are asking for. I know the previous government did some really absurd things, but they want to bring in phantom members. That would be the most absurd thing I've ever heard.

The Acting Speaker: It being precisely 9:30 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

The House adjourned at 2130.

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