

CHAPTER 3. THE OBJECTIVES AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

(A) Statement of Objectives

A tentative formulation of some of the problems facing local government in the area was attempted in the concluding chapter of the Report on Research Findings, and has been repeated in the last paragraph of Chapter 2 of this report.

In spite of the fact that a number of the submissions argued for retention of the status quo, none of these presented evidence to invalidate the research findings, or to prove that there are no problems; nor did they suggest any feasible method of dealing with them. On the contrary, the majority of submissions supported the conclusion that there are in fact serious problems which will require some significant changes in local government if they are to be met.

In light of the research and submissions, we have concluded that the present structure of local government in the Review area, taken as a whole, suffers from the following deficiencies:

- (1) It is not sufficiently responsive, either to area-wide needs such as regional planning or, in large urban wards, to really local needs.
- (2) It is not sufficiently responsible, but provides too many opportunities to pass the blame to another when needs are not met. Because authority is divided among far too many bodies, there is no clear-cut responsibility when something goes wrong.
- (3) It is not sufficiently capable of performing necessary functions in large parts of the area, because adequate financial resource and trained staff are lacking.

- (4) It is not properly coordinated in the handling of the growing number of problems which affect more than one municipality or which require the close cooperation of several administrative departments. Federal-municipal coordination is also often inadequate.
- (5) It is not equitable in the ratios of elected representative to population, or in the allocation of resources, costs and benefits of municipal government.
- (6) It is not particularly efficient because of the duplication among numerous administrations, and the fact that many of them are too small to employ trained staff or modern methods. The negotiations required for any inter-governmental coordination which is attempted are also inherently inefficient and time-consuming, and may also be inconclusive.
- (7) It has not been sufficiently adaptable to changing needs, being bound by rigid boundaries, organizational structures and procedures, which require external intervention by the Province to alter them. It is not capable of self-evolution.

In view of these deficiencies, our objectives in formulating proposals for a new system of municipal government are stated as follows:

To so reorganize the structure and functions of local government in the Review area as to make it more responsive to both local and area-wide needs, with clear lines of responsibility and accountability to the electorate; to give the reorganized government adequate resources, and assure that its costs are equitable borne and its benefits equitably shares; to equip it with an efficient administration under effective control, together with devices for formal continuous coordination; to allow for genuine flexibility in its adaptation to future needs, and to build into it the power of self-evolution so that its form as well as its function may continually improve without need for external intervention to overcome rigidity; to provide for a smooth and rational trans-

ition from the present system to the new one; to create the possibility of effective federal-local coordination by creation of a responsible local system fully capable of performing well all functions within the municipal field, and having adequate channels for federal-local communication.

In summary, the needs of local government in the Review area require basic changes in the present structure; the form of change must not only provide technical solutions to known problems but must also create a political organization which will contribute to the development of a mature approach to local government within a framework of increasing freedom and responsibility.

(B) An Approach to Alternative Solutions - including those suggested in the Submissions

There are a number of local government structures which might be examined, including any number of variations on basic alternatives. The basic alternatives, of course, must be chosen from the only three that are available:

1. Leave the present structure as it is;
2. Adapt some known system to the local government problems of the Review area;
3. Propose a solution which has little precedent but which appears to fit the unique circumstances of the area under study.

It must be stated at the outset that, even if it were open to us to recommend (which it is not), we would not propose a federal district because it would mean the abolition of local government. We are not in sympathy with such an objective. In addition, we doubt the feasibility of this alternative under the Canadian Constitution. We therefore cannot accept the suggestion made in the submissions for such a governmental structure for the Review area.

For somewhat different reasons, we have not considered the creation of an eleventh province as a worthwhile alternative. We find that this suggestion avoids the real responsibility of exhausting local government alternatives within the present provinces and ignores the problem of self-sufficiency of the proposed new province.

Having regard the present and anticipated problems of local government in the Review area, as clearly established in the research phase of this Review, and having regard to the nature of most submissions for changes in present organization, we find the retention of the present structure to be untenable. We are left with the last two basic alternatives.

Other Examples

There are two basic patterns of municipal organization in Canada: the unitary 'sovereign' municipality which increases its size as urbanization spreads beyond its borders, and the 'federated' group of municipalities usually found in the county system of government or in some relatively new urban structures (Toronto and Winnipeg). The advantages of the single 'amalgamated' municipal government are to be found in central political control, uniform taxation, and an undivided administration; it can attain control of policies and administrative efficiency - but so can a dictatorship (theoretically). The test of healthy local government must be found in something far more than efficiency; democracy has never been efficient in the business management sense of the term. In local government the test must be both an ability of the governed to attach responsibility to the governors and for the governors (elected councils) to be responsible to the needs of the people. In large, growing and complex urban areas the use of ratios of representatives to population commonly found at provincial and federal levels of government, and adequate for these governments, fails to provide the degree of responsiveness required in local government. One representative for each 50,000 or 75,000 is not our idea of 'local' government. If, indeed, local government should be 'close to the people' then it follows that the people must at least have an opportunity to know some of the representatives.

Hereto fore this problem has not been solved because of a fear of an 'unwieldy' council if it should become 'too large'.

Successive annexations are either contested by the people in the areas being annexed because of a fear of 'loss of autonomy', higher taxes (or both) and various other reasons. The process has all the distasteful elements of the struggle between predator and the victimized; the government of our complex urban region needs a better basis for structural change.

The single, while, centralized, 'bureaucratic' large urban municipality is, therefore, not as attractive as a preferable method of governing metropolitan areas; the new form of human settlement requires a more sophisticated approach.

Two attempts have been made to overcome the disadvantages of a monolithic local government organization in Canada, in Toronto and in Winnipeg. We are familiar with both examples but do not propose to discuss each in detail. Metropolitan Toronto is an example of a 'federated' group of municipalities with each member of having some 'sovereign' responsibilities, carrying them out through both a separate 'legislative' and administrative structure. The only fundamental difference between the Toronto and Winnipeg examples is in the constitution of each: Toronto (Metropolitan) is a 'government of governments' with the Metropolitan Council composed of local government representatives indirectly elected, while Winnipeg follows the London (England) example of separate elections for local (borough) and central (Greater London) Councils.

Such federated systems divide municipal functions between the local and 'Metro' governments. Certain responsibilities are thus given to the local level, with each of the local municipalities being charged with the same set of functions. Each municipality is not however given an equal resource base commensurate with these responsibilities, and as a result the standard of local services shows considerable divergence from municipality to another. The recent report of the Royal

Commission on Metropolitan Toronto reflects this aspect of the problem.

Also common to such systems is the existence of a relatively large number of areas within the same urban complex which have had separate political existence over a relatively long period of time and have coped with their problems of growth and change in a more or less adequate way; the less adequate, the greater the necessity to form 'Metropolitan' governments. The aspect of scale or total size of the urban area also is highly relative to such 'federated' structures.

Few, if any, of these characteristics exist in the Review area; total geographic size does not, in itself, make comparisons appropriate. Most of the urban population is concentrated in the Cities of Ottawa and Eastview, the Village of Rockcliffe Park and relatively small portions of the Townships of Nepean and Gloucester. Recent urban growth has occurred within several jurisdictions relatively ill-equipped to plan for a rapidly growing urban population and to operate urban institutions; certainly there is a wide diversity of resources to meet the high costs of urban services of both the 'hard' and 'soft' varieties (water pipes and welfare).

The Ottawa area is in the early stages of a 'metropolitan' settlement pattern; metropolitan government would be an illogical structure from either the social or economic point of view. It would be impractical to form a 'metropolitan' government for this area without dissolving the City of Ottawa and the result would have to be a series of local units without adequate resources to provide the local component of services inherent in any 'two-tier' system of local government if a meaningful role were to remain for the lower 'tier'.

It is within this context that we find the proposals for change contained in many of the submissions unacceptable. The City of Ottawa, in its brief, proposed a limited (geographical) monolithic structure which ignored the essentially dynamic nature of urban growth beyond the greenbelt and was not convincing in its proposed relations with the remaining

County. The County Council, on the other hand, tended to deny the existence of the City and, mistakenly we believe, sought a solution in greater centralization at the County (partial 'metropolitan') government level.

We find that a structure preserving some of the essential features of the County or 'metropolitan' system and providing for central policy determinations and administrative operations best suits the needs of the Review area both now and for some time in the future.

Whereas other examples tend to assume the division of both the legislative and administrative functions between two levels of local government as an essential requirement we feel that it is not only possible but indeed desirable to think of a complementary legislative function but an undivided administrative function. Central division-making and administration combined with local policy formulation - local councils acting as an extension of a central council - is therefore the key objective and forms the cornerstone of the recommended system of local government in the Review area.