

NOTES FOR AN ADDRESS

by

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to

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Metropolitan Toronto is a municipality that was forged of necessity, founded in controversy, and born with expectation. The fact that it has succeeded beyond the most optimistic of those expectations is a tribute both to the men and women who were responsible for its birth and development, and to their foresight, their ability to change, and in fact their willingness to anticipate change and accommodate both themselves and Metro to it. The challenges were not easily met. Metro was formed as a supplier of municipal services as it became rapidly apparent after the Second World War that the municipal structure of the areas around the City of Toronto simply was unable to cope with the increasing demands of population, demands that could not be met by fragmented jurisdictions, fighting each other over every road widening, and in fact in competition against each other for the assessment they all so badly needed to maintain their own ability to provide services. Thus was formed in 1953 the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto. There were prophets of doom; there were those who said the neighbourhoods would be destroyed and we'd all lose our identities.

But Metro has been a success. It's been so successful, in fact, that it's become a model for cities around the world who are trying to attempt to solve their own problems now - problems they face in many cases because they didn't have the foresight of those who went before us in the past two decades.

In the beginning, the relationship of Metro and the Province was that of father and child. We learned a set of rules for dealing with the senior government. But they were rules based on a relationship that is now outdated. The child has matured and grown to adulthood. We are now in the big league - the league of cities which dominate the urban life of Canada. As children, everyone in this room went to school to learn the three R's -- reading, writing and arithmetic. As we grew up, what we learned from these rules has sustained us. There are also three R's in the life of every city -- responsiveness, responsibility and reality. Of these three the reality that today in Canada the cities are where this nation lives is a lesson we are surely learning. At times I have to seriously wonder if Queen's Park and Ottawa include reality in the three R's of their learning experience.

Today, in Metro Toronto we have the responsibilities, and we accept them, for transit, homes, the provision of essential services, clean air, clean water -- the responsibility for deciding in fact what kind of city we will have and more important the task and responsibility of determining a way of life for our citizens over the next two decades. And if we are to carry out those responsibilities, we must have the willingness to change, the desire to have the very best for the taxpayers, that was shown so admirably by Fred Gardiner, Bill Allen and Ab Campbell. There is no question in my mind that the present Metropolitan Council has that desire, that sense of responsibility.

Probably the most important reality we face is the reality of politics, the fact that often it's the squeaking wheel that gets the grease. In our relationships with other governments, we must present our own positions with force and clarity never attempted before in order to achieve the equity that we desire, and that our citizens demand.

It is a fact that to survive in the political reality of the squeaky wheel syndrome we have to squeak a little louder and begin demanding grease at least equal to that received by some other cities in this country. If decisions which affect the lives of Metro citizens are going to continue to be made by the Provincial and Federal Governments without adequate consultation with us I can assure you Metro will be squeaking. The luxury of other senior governments making unilateral decisions in splendid isolation from the priorities which the Metro Council sets cannot be tolerated. An idea which will have to be explored is whether or not Metro has a critical need in the political sense to establish a permanent office in Ottawa. The cost of "our man in Ottawa" might well be the best investment we can make.

You may have read recently in the press of the Tri-Level Conference two weeks ago in Edmonton, at which the federal government, the provinces and the municipalities sat down together and exchanged some very frank opinions about where they are going and what they plan to do. There was strong debate at Edmonton. And I found it most heartening

that the leadership, the thrust, the source of new ideas at that conference did not come from the so-called senior levels of government, but from the cities. The cities knew what they were after, they were prepared to use their knowledge and their power and their political clout, and they succeeded in getting a great deal of what they were seeking.

Among the decisions reached at that conference was that there will for the first time be a task force looking into all aspects of government revenue in Canada. Hopefully, when the information from that task force is available, decisions will be made that will provide the tax money to the governments who are really providing the services. There are now thousands of civil servants in Canada who do nothing but transfer cash back and forth from government to government. If taxation goes to the government that is providing the service, this waste will end. But more importantly, the people -- people like you and I -- will know exactly where our tax money is going, and we will be able to hold accountable the governments that are really spending it.

All three levels of government have to learn that if we in government have the power to dip into your pocket, you should be able in turn, to demand that each level of government give you a more precise accounting of where and why your dollars are spent. I sometimes think that the bureaucrat who invented transfer payments between governments was the same guy who invented the wheel. All that we seem to be doing is going around in circles.

The cities of this nation are in the position today that the Provinces were in the 1960's. You'll recall the determination of John Robarts after his first federal-provincial conference that he would never again go to a meeting so ill-prepared, and with so little knowledge of the real power he had. The strength of Ontario he fostered and the growth of the power of the Provinces made the 1960's the decade of the Provinces. Saskatchewan, then Quebec and Ontario, then Alberta and British Columbia, and then finally even the traditionally-dependent Maritime Provinces, started flexing their muscles and saying to Ottawa that it was time for them to be making their own decisions about what was best for their own people, and making their own basic decisions about where their money should be spent. And you've seen the results. The Provinces are no longer dictated to. They're regarded as equals in the confederation of this country and listened to and respected. I submit that if the 1960's were the decade of the Provinces, then the 1970's will be the decade of the cities. The cities of this country are determined to make their own decisions, determined to decide for themselves how their citizens can best be served, determined they will no longer be dictated to. And they are taking this position not because they want power but because they have no other choice. Look about you and you will see why. Examine how much of your taxes go to the federal government, and think for a second about the services the federal government gives you. Look at the taxation dollars that pour into Queen's Park, difficult as that amount is to determine. Examine what the provincial government provides for you. Then look at the amount you pay in

municipal taxes each year, and look at the services provided by this municipality. The results of that comparison are self-evident. The cities -- this city -- are now saying we have the strength, we are going to exercise it, and we are going to exercise it in the best way we know how. We can do it best because we are the local governments -- the level of government closest to the citizens and their daily lives. We accept the responsibility for our decisions, as we should. Then let us start deciding now, today, how the cities are to have the resources to carry out their tasks. The leadership role of the cities determines that we look forward. The leadership role which the Metro Council must display demands that our only attachment to the past must lie in the lessons it can teach us.

We must take some very hard looks at the way we have been governed in the past. Indeed, we must question the very form of the metropolitan government. Is it the best possible form of city government? Is it supplying the very best value for the taxpayer? Frankly, few of us know this because we are kept so busy in the day-to-day operations of keeping the city going that we simply haven't had time for a pause. Time to consider what type of government is best for a region such as ours. We must constantly challenge what we are doing.

I will be releasing in the next few days a Green Paper to the Metropolitan Council that outlines the broad terms of reference in the first searching examination of the Metropolitan government that has been conducted since Dr. Carl Goldenberg's report in the mid-60's. I can't, of course, give you the details of it, but I can tell you that it proposes an examination of

Metro in all its aspects, and that its intent is to provide for participation in the process of change by all relevant levels of government and especially by citizens. As the examination goes on, a series of interim reports will be published and publicly debated. We expect and hope to receive from the citizens of Metro sound advice, a firm indication of how they want their government to function in order to best serve an increasingly sophisticated level of demands for municipal services. Perhaps a decision will be reached that because of our changing society an entirely new structure will be required, one that is more responsive to local and neighbourhood needs while still retaining its responsibility to the whole of the Metropolitan area. The men and women on Metro Council know this already -- that while they're sitting as City or Borough Councillors they have one electorate. But while they're sitting as Metro elected officials, they often have an entirely different set of demands placed on them, a set of demands that's often in conflict with the wishes of their own electorate but which nonetheless, in conscience, cannot be ignored. The immediate problem facing us now, of course, is how to resolve that conflict. One option which might have to be considered in the future of Metro is a cabinet form of government. Under this system, the Metropolitan Council would select from its own members, elected representatives who would carry the responsibility for a specific Metro function. So there would be, for instance, a Municipal Social Services Minister and a Municipal

Public Works Minister. These men and women would consult on policy with the heads of departments, and bills would be introduced before the Executive Committee, which would act as a Cabinet. But there is one important difference. The Cabinet I am proposing would hold its deliberations in public. There would be no Cabinet secrecy. All bills would be forced to stand both public and political scrutiny before they were introduced at the Metropolitan Council. It in turn would then become the equivalent of a Parliament. The important advantage of such a system is that it places the responsibility for policy where it belongs -- in the hands of the people who got elected. There would be a clear division between policy formulation and implementation, and there would be no doubt where the responsibility lies.

The review of Metro will deal with other areas of responsibility. As we look back over the last two decades of Metro, we see that our own responsibilities have increased beyond any expectation that could have been shared by Les Frost and Fred Gardiner as they hammered out the functions of this municipality. We have a police department that is among the best in the world, dedicated to the principle that not only must there be respect by the citizens for the police, but respect by the police for the citizens. We have improved the environment of the Metro area beyond measure through the acquisition of lake-front land, and the purchase of large park areas such as York Downs

and Tam O'Shanter that will be preserved for all time as open public space. We have preserved our own parks for our children and their children. Through the establishment of the emergency measures department, we have preserved the safety of our citizens. Our advances in transportation would have been undreamed of 20 years ago. But we can only advance as we have the power to advance, and the desire to change and adapt. We are now in the league of cities, a league in the medieval sense of a gathering for a common purpose. We in Metro are prepared to take a role of leadership in that big league. Already, we are offering all the assistance and expertise we have available to assist in the formation and functioning of the new regional governments around us. And we do that not because we have to, but because we have a responsibility as leaders in the league of cities to those other members of the league who are now facing many of the problems we have already surmounted.

As I said at the beginning, Metro Toronto was forged of necessity, founded in controversy, and born with expectation. Our past has been successful because the system of Metro Government has had within it the capacity to evolve as the pressures of new demands and needs have arisen. We changed in 1967 and the process of change has again begun when the Metro Council recently approved a new composition for itself which gives all the Boroughs of Metro a more equal voice.

In the days ahead as we again examine the Metro system I would hope that many of you within this room would contribute your voice to the public dialogue which will take place. It would indeed be tragic if the only dialogue we hear is from ratepayer presidents.

To date those who have governed Metro in the past can be proud of their achievements for the monuments to their success are all around us. Some people are now saying those monuments need to be re-examined in the light of the new emergency objectives of our urban society.

I, too, believe it is time to reflect. However it is important we do not lose the innovative spirit which has permitted Metro to meet the expectations of its birth.

The seeds of progress are rooted in discontent. The distinguishing feature of the majority of those who have been elected to the Metro Council since its inception has been their urgent restlessness to make this city a better place to live.

It is in this spirit and with my personal appeal to you to become more involved in this city where you live that I would like to leave with you this thought. The process for change is a total one involving all of our citizens, and I would most earnestly urge all of you in this room to let your voices be heard in the public debates which will soon be forthcoming.