

True Davidson, April 28/69

It is no surprise that Peter Newman should be able to marshall brilliantly arguments in support of even a bad cause. My skill is not in marshalling arguments but in getting things done. I do not want to be a theoretician, any more than I want to be a ballet dancer, although I can admire the grace and dexterity of both. What I have to say to you to-day is based on practical experience of political administration and, I hope, sympathetic understanding of people's aims for themselves, their community and the larger region of which it is a part.

Eighteen years ago, about, I worked on a small aspect of educational amalgamation as a member of a sub-committee of the Civic Advisory Council. My job was to answer the question as to what savings can be effected by an amalgamation of the Purchasing Departments of the various Boards of Education in what has since come to be known as the Metro area. We did not ask whether any savings at all would be effected. We were sure, theoretically, that there would be savings. In actual fact, I soon found that this was incorrect. Except for certain highly technical items used very rarely--in technical schools or similar specialized classes--which were suggested by the officials contacted--I find no school system which did not buy in sufficient quantities to secure best prices and/or discounts. Furthermore, costs of warehousing and distribution came into the picture. I found that economies of warehousing and delivery to be accomplished by deliveries directly to schools (from a mass order) offset any trifling extra charge for such deliveries. It began to be borne in on me at this time that every level of handling and supervision adds cost, and that, for each operation, there is a point beyond which any savings on larger operations diminish, and speed and efficiency of operations decrease. In approaching the amalgamation of any service I try to find this point.

Now, like all newspapermen dealing with politicians, Mr. Newman has the advantage of having both the first word and the last. However, as with all those advocating an action, the onus is on him to prove the need for the action he advocates. Even in this era of violence and revolution, sane people do not involve themselves in the delays and confusion of change for its own sake.

The Star case for amalgamation runs on a number of, in my opinion, unfounded assumptions, e.g.;

- That highest standards are identical with highest costs.
- That identical advantages are the same as equal advantages.
- That material perquisites are all that matter (logical--matter--material?)
- That the number of councils, boards and commissions is the index of over-government rather than the number of levels of bureaucracy.
- That tax exemptions of Toronto hospitals, universities, etc., which, by the way, are in process of being done away with--mean that Toronto bears almost the "entire burden of these Metro services".
- That inequality of tax rates is a bad thing instead of an incentive to economy.

*Old name Newman (p. 20)*

I have tried to expose the falsity of most of the assumptions of amalgamationists.

I would sum up the falsity of most of their arguments by saying flatly:

Amalgamation of Metro would not save money - (Why?)

It would not increase efficiency - (Why?)

Furthermore, it is my honest belief that it would make Toronto a poorer place in which to live.

The Study of Local Government in the Greater London (England) Area established criteria for optimum size and assignment of services in a federal system. A local government (size 100,000 to 250,000) should administer the services such as health and welfare, libraries and recreation, etc., that are close to the people.

My own brief to the Goldenberg Commission stressed the value of neighbourhood and community in these days of rootlessness that claims praise as mobility. (Jane Jacobs). The community is a substitute for the extended family and its strength should not be withdrawn. Toronto the Good, the City of Churches, the City of Homes, is now trying to become Toronto the Exciting City. Why? To be like New York? Or even Montreal? Let us rather build our greatness on its native foundations to love and encourage each other and to welcome strangers with our warmest and most varied hospitality--a place to stand, a place to grow, a place to be ourselves.

April 28, 1969.

True Davidson,  
Mayor, East York.