

A Tale of one City in Crisis

Accords and Agreements have become the new political reality. Their successes, as well as failures or ineptness, mark their imprint or lack thereof, on Canadian everyday life.

Toronto finds itself in those unwritten understandings that supersede any pen to paper agreement. Toronto is the City that everyone loves to hate. Any organization that includes this City, loves its money but offers low recognition of its needs. We are continually viewed as whiners.

While Toronto carries significant political clout in numbers, that strength is overshadowed by the remaining Federal and Provincial membership that browbeats Toronto's elected officials. Many a time I have heard the mantra: if you give anything to Toronto, it must be given to every other community.

As a native Torontonian, I see this City's greatness in decline. No longer are we the "Banking Capital" or the "Hi-tech Centre" of our nation. Toronto is pillaged for its wealth but dumped with very unique problems, created elsewhere. We have downloaded issues from the Province as well as Federal immigration policies, coupled with socio-economic problems.

Toronto is unique. What the Country and the Province have forgotten is that Toronto is the Capital of Ontario. This City is not treated with the respect of an important Capital City. Elsewhere in the world, governments invest heavily in their capital cities, not here.

For me, the City of Toronto Act, is one of those failures that has marked the attitude towards this City. The power to tax lets the other levels of government off the hook. Property tax has subsidized Provincially-mandated responsibilities. Taxation powers unique to Toronto, will make Toronto's decline that much faster. Other cities and towns will eventually feel Toronto's pain, as migration will flow from Toronto. Provincial and Federal politicians, particularly those from Toronto, would be wise to push for a new

accord that would also benefit the rest of the Province. Using a forward-thinking approach, remove all property taxes and collect them from either income tax, sales tax, gas tax, GST, PST or a combination thereof. Then provide funding on a per capita basis to ALL municipalities using pre-determined formulae for social items such as welfare and immigration settlement, roads, public transportation, etc.

A new Agreement is needed not only for Toronto but for all cities, towns and regions. Our political leaders have failed the Capital City of Ontario. We have two elections coming up and it is now time for us to flex our political strength. The rest of the country would be wise to help Toronto for its own sake and also, to keep uniting the country, by loving to hate this Proud and Great City.

Your Neighbour,

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