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Roxboro's mayor battling merger

By MARK DALY

Roxboro Mayor Dr. W. G. Boll is waging a furious one-man battle against the amalgamation of his small West Island town with the much larger municipality of Dollard des Ormeaux.

However, the merger seems almost certain with both Dollard council and Roxboro council in favor.

A Riddell-Stead and Co. report on the amalgamation said a general tax reduction of some \$14 per year for Dollard homeowners and \$35 for Roxboro ratepayers could be expected for five years after a merger.

Dr. Boll says this is "pie in the sky".

He said yesterday in letters to two local newspapers. "The attempts by the town council of Dollard des

Ormeaux to juggle declarations of taxes to give the impression that the taxes are at some phenomenally low level is deplorable".

"Dollard has not included in its tax rate, all the components which are included by other municipalities. The publicized Dollard rate of \$1.41 (per \$100 of evaluation) included only the administration and MUC costs. In the town of Roxboro the equivalent charges are only \$1.35".

He called the merger proposal an attempt "to take over the town of Roxboro".

A joint petition will probably be submitted to Quebec by both councils soon. The Quebec municipal commission could then call a public inquiry and perhaps recommend a referendum.

Mayor Boll was not available for comment.

Gerry Deploure, mayor of Dollard, said he had "no comment to make but we'll be discussing and answering the letter at Tuesday's meeting of council."

Mr. Deploure is in favor of merger referendums for both Dollard and Roxboro.

"Certainly if merger doesn't offer Dollard the financial benefits that it does Roxboro, but certainly amalgamation would be beneficial to a degree. It seems to be in line with the views of the Quebec department of municipal affairs."

Mayor Deploure is not in favor of the West Island "super-city" proposed a few years ago by some of the 12 western suburbs.

A study indicated that proposal would have financial and other benefits.

But Mr. Deploure says: "There were no benefits in that at all; except for tax relief for some."

Recently Dollard ratepayers approved a \$5 million civic centre for the city, which with a population of 36,000 is now the largest on the West Island. Dollard council invited Roxboro to share the arena section of the proposed centre, paying on a per capita basis.

While most Roxboro councillors were in favor, Dr. Boll wanted the town, which has 2,000 residents, to build its own arena.

ici pour en parler...

avec andré beauvais

■ Les autorités municipales de Dol-lard-des-Ormeaux et de Roxboro doivent être saisies ces jours-ci d'un règlement de fusion de ces villes. Après étude du règlement, une proposition conjointe sera faite au ministre des Affaires municipales et de l'Environnement et ce dernier pourrait décréter la fusion. Si un seul contribuable s'y oppose, la Commission municipale du Québec devra tenir une enquête publique sur la fusion.

The referendum will be the most important in the history of the town. Citizens will be asked whether or not they favor a merger of Roxboro with its rapidly-developing neighbor, Dollard des Ormeaux.

Town council has set Tuesday evening, April 16, as the date for a public information meeting on the proposed merger. It will be held at 8.30 p.m. at Roxboro Elementary School. The legal adviser for both towns will chair the meeting.

Also present will be a representative of Riddell, Stead and Co., the firm of chartered accountants which prepared a 1973 feasibility report on the merger claiming both towns could expect reductions in general tax rates with amalgamation.

Roxboro Mayor Dr. W. G. Boll, who is opposed to the merger and who claims figures in the Riddell, Stead report are misleading, is expected to attend the public meeting, along with his four councillors, who are in favor of amalgamation.

On April 21 ratepayers will also be asked to cast two separate ballots indicating whether or not they are in favor of construction of an indoor ice arena and/or an outdoor heated pool.

An argument between Dr. Boll and his four councillors over construction of a municipal complex with both pool and arena has become entwined with the referendum issue in recent months.

The four councillors are in favor of Roxboro citizens sharing, on a per capita basis, costs for a proposed \$6 million dollar civic centre in Dollard which will have three ice sheets. Dr. Boll argues that Roxboro needs its own facilities.

At a recent council meeting a group of citizens, armed with a 700-name petition, asked council to draft a bylaw for construction of an arena-pool complex. A council majority turned down the request, but agreed to include the two additional questions on separate ballots at the April 21 referendum.

Councillor Ted Bjerkelund said last night that if citizens favor merger with Dollard and construction of either an arena or pool —

Roxboro to hold April referendum on merger plan

By MARK DALY

Roxboro officials are hoping for a large turnout to the polls Sunday, April 21, at a referendum which will decide the fate of the small West Island municipality.

or both — bylaws for construction of the sports facilities would not be passed until a merger is approved by drafting the needed petition to the Quebec department of municipal affairs.

This way, councillor Bjerkelund pointed out, costs of such projects would be borne by the new, unified municipality of Dollard-Roxboro. In the same way, if a merger is approved, Roxboro citizens would be asked to participate in payment for the \$6 million Dollard civic centre, expected to be completed within a few years.

Dr. Boll said last night he hoped for "at least a 50 per cent turnout" at the April 21 referendum, and expressed the opinion that citizens would turn thumbs down on merger.

"The only question now is, will the councillors abide by the results of the referendum, which isn't a binding vote?"

Another Roxboro councillor, Bob Surprenant, claims the town does not need its own arena, but that if "the citizens express a different wish, it would seem that we would have to abide by it. There's never been another instance where we've gone back on our word."

Recently Dr. Boll called figures in the Riddell-Stead report, "pie in the sky and pure hokum." The report

said that Dollard, with 36,000 inhabitants, could expect a general tax reduction for home-owners of some \$14 a year and that Roxboro (population 8,000) ratepayers could expect a general tax reduction of some \$35.

The mayor says the merger movement is seen as an alternative to being swallowed by Pierrefonds, smaller than Dollard in population but larger in area.

Dollard mayor Gerald Dephoure has said his town is willing to abide by the wishes of Roxboro citizens. "A joint petition of fusion should not be adopted without prior approval of the smaller community."

Report promises lower taxes

Fusion referendum for Roxboro

By BOB HAYES
of The Gazette

Roxboro residents will decide in a three-question referendum April 21 whether they want their municipality to merge with neighboring

Dollard des Ormeaux and whether they want an indoor ice arena and an outdoor heated swimming pool.

Regardless of the outcome of the fusion vote, council has promised that the municipality, with a population of 7,635 will build either one or both recreational facilities, if approval is given.

Mayor Dr. William Boll, strongly opposed to the merger, tried unsuccessfully to have the vote postponed to May 12, but this was unanimously opposed by the councillors.

The mayor said a report on the financial feasibility of the fusion by a firm of chartered accountants will not be ready until next week, leaving insuf-



ROXBORO MAYOR BOLL
... opposes union

ficient time for it to be "thoroughly analyzed."

Council, however, noted the mayor and the four councillors' terms expire in No-

vember and decisions must be made as soon as possible.

Councillor John Salvis said the fusion issue has dragged on long enough "and we should get it over as quickly as we can."

Council has scheduled an information meeting for April 16 at the Roxboro Elementary School, at 8.30 p.m.

Councillors have objected to the construction of a \$900,000 arena and pool complex in Roxboro, favoring accepting a Dollard offer to share facilities at its \$6 million civic centre, which includes three ice surfaces.

A group of citizens, backed by a 700-signature petition, recently urged council to approve a bylaw to construct

the recreation project. This was refused by council, which referred the question to a referendum.

A merger feasibility study released in December, estimated that Dollard's 36,000 residents could expect tax reductions until 1978 of as much as \$14 per home, while Roxboro ratepayers would see a drop of \$35.

Boll described the figures as "a pie in the sky."

Dollard Mayor Gerald Dephoure said his town is ready to welcome Roxboro residents.

"A joint petition of fusion to the Quebec government should not be prepared without the support of the smaller community," Dephoure said.

Roxboro residents need more information before facing any referendum on fusion

Sir, — The recent surge of interest on fusion of Roxboro and Dollard is, I find, based more on subjective opinion than on facts. Indeed, the entire issue as has been reported to date does not contain acceptable evidence that the so-called need to decide on such an amalgamation is really vital at this time, and, furthermore, that by doing so the citizens of Roxboro will clearly stand to gain.

As a resident of Roxboro for nine years, I have noted not only how well balanced this municipality has managed its financial and community development affairs, but have also witnessed the concurrent and disproportionate growth of the Dollard municipality with its land and building costs rising at alarming rates.

Roxboro is a beautiful, well-settled and mature community with a valuable element of conservatism in terms of its financial and growth management. Its record of stable growth has kept its citizens, relative to most other west island homeowners, more secure and less volatile in terms of tax increases commensurate with its facilities and public convenience.

Thus the talk of fusion, either with Dollard or Pierrefonds does not invite any encouragement on our part to join with either one at this time. The authors of the report of Riddell Stead Co., who were commissioned by Dollard to study the possibilities of a fusion with Roxboro, as accountants, have made certain assumptions whose validity is open to question. An accountant deals with history. He is not qualified to make usable assumptions on the outcome of a municipal merger whose future costs could almost certainly be inaccurate and misleading, given the present high inflationary cost factors attendant on material, labor, overhead, land and capi-

tal availability in terms of incentives and other competitive needs for capital. Obviously, there are too many variables and uncertainties at the present time in regard to this matter to expect Roxboro residents to decide on the basis of one report...

Let us consider factors which need further examination before we take the referendum:

1) Dr. Goldbloom at a meeting in Dollard attended by elected officials of both municipalities (Roxboro and Dollard), categorically stated that the provincial government will not force any amalgamation of the West Island municipalities. The choice therefore rests solely with the citizens and this in turn rests on the real benefits to be gained by the homeowner (or taxpayer) at an appropriate time.

2) A meeting has been called for April 16 by the four councillors of Roxboro (not its mayor) to discuss the options. At this time, Riddell Stead Co. will be obliged to clearly state its basic assumptions. The citizens must judge the validity of those assumptions in order to determine whether their conclusions are sound and future objectives realistically attainable. The relevance of those figures and conclusions must stand up to, solid scrutiny and second sober thought.

3) We have recently, all of us on this island, experienced the rapid growth in MUC costs reflected in our tax bills. This entire issue of the MUC's administration is undergoing a complete re-examination, to bring order out of present chaos and dissatisfaction. But any meaningful tax cut is not likely to be realized for three years. On this issue alone it would be prudent for the citizens of Roxboro to defer any decision, because under present conditions the larger the municipality, the greater the costs per capita...

Stanley L. Jacobs,
Roxboro.

The Roxboro, Dollard merger

Sir, — In the April 3 issue of The Star, under the heading "Roxboro to hold April referendum on merger plan", two incorrect words unfortunately give the opposite meaning to one of my statements. This should have read as follows:

"Councillor Ted Bjerkelund said last night that if citizens favor merger with Dollard and construction of either an arena or pool — or both — bylaws for construction of the sports facilities would (delete "not") be passed before (instead of "until") a merger is approved by drafting the needed petition to the Quebec department of municipal affairs."

I should further clarify this to say that the sports facilities bylaw would be passed whether the merger referendum is affirmative or negative. In other words, the two issues of merger and sports facilities have been clearly separated so that Roxboro's citizens can vote on each question on its own merits. The rest of the quotation is correct.

**T. Bjerkelund,
Roxboro.**

Roxboro: référendum sur thème de fusion

Roxboro demeurera-t-elle une municipalité autonome ou se fusionnera-t-elle volontairement avec Dollard-des-Ormeaux? Ce sont les contribuables de Roxboro qui mettront un terme à ce débat opposant le maire à ses quatre conseillers, par le référendum qui se tiendra demain.

Ce référendum permettra à tous les propriétaires de cette petite ville de 7.700 habitants de l'ouest de l'île de Montréal de se prononcer sur trois questions. Tout d'abord, la fusion volontaire avec la municipalité voisine, Dollard-des-Ormeaux, ville de 36.000 habitants; et la construction d'un aréna pour le hockey et d'une piscine extérieure chauffée. Il aura lieu de 9 h à 19 h, au chalet municipal, 10, 11e rue.

La question de la fusion fut suscitée par le rapport Hannigan qui pour réduire de 29 à 19 le nombre de municipalités à l'intérieur du territoire de la Communauté urbaine de Montréal proposait la fusion de Roxboro à Pierrefonds, Sainte-Geneviève et Île Bizard. Voulant éviter cette fusion, les conseillers ont proposé plutôt une fusion volontaire avec Dollard-des-Ormeaux. Ceux-ci pour réaliser leur projet ont fait préparer une étude qui démontrait la rentabilité d'une telle fusion en raison des subventions accordées par le gouvernement du Québec dans un tel cas. Les habitants de la nouvelle ville qui s'appellerait alors Dollard vaudraient possiblement \$9 ou \$12 en terme de subvention.

Cette fusion volontaire, selon les conseillers de Roxboro, serait plus avantageuse qu'une fusion forcée avec des partenaires qu'ils ne pourraient choi-

sir. Et elle doit être faite, précisent-ils, avant que le gouvernement ne l'impose.

De son côté, le maire William Boll se dit opposé à toute fusion parce que malgré une augmentation des revenus, les services coûtent toujours plus cher.

Voters to settle Roxboro merger dispute tomorrow

By **BOB HAYES**
of *The Gazette*

Landowners in the West Island community of Roxboro will vote tomorrow to decide whether the town will merge with neighboring Dollard des Ormeaux.

There are 1,840 eligible voters in the referendum for or against becoming citizens of Dollard.

Roxboro Mayor Dr. William Boll is banking on a 60 per cent turnout to "decisively settle the issue" that has split the suburban council for five months.

The town's four councillors unanimously favor amalgamation, while Dr. Boll wants Roxboro to retain its autonomy.

The landowners — tenants are not permitted to vote — will be asked the question: "Do you agree to the fusion of Dollard des Ormeaux and Roxboro?"

TRIPLE VOTE

At the same time, they'll be voting on an indoor hockey arena and an heated outdoor swimming pool.

Regardless of the outcome on the fusion question, council has promised either or both the recreational projects will be built if approved.

Polls will be open from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. in Roxboro elementary school on 11th St.

If the voters go for the fusion, a joint petition for the merger will have to be prepared by the two councils and approved by Quebec. The town would be named Dollard.

A report, prepared by Riddell, Stead and Co., chartered accountants, estimates that the owner of an average \$20,000 home in Dollard will see a reduction in his tax bill of \$143.22 over the first five years of the fusion, and the comparable proprietor in Roxboro will save \$193.39 during that period.

QUEBEC GRANTS

The savings are promised as a result of a municipal affairs ministry per capita fusion grant of \$3 annually for the five years and an annual \$10-per-person grant for all communities over 50,000.

The two communities now boast a total population of about 44,000 — 36,000 in the present Dollard — and, if merged, it is expected the new town would hit the 50,000 mark within the first 12 months.

Battling the proposal, Mayor Boll charged yesterday that the \$6 million Dollard civic centre, including three indoor ice sheets, will not be sufficient to handle the combined needs of a merged municipality. Construction of the centre will start this summer.

He also claimed the four pro-fusion councillors are using "scare tactics" to sway the voters by distributing handbills with "misleading information."

The councillors state that if the town doesn't join with its neighbor, it eventually will be forced to fuse with Pierrefonds.

One of Boll's supporters, Traudie Ektvedt, said she received a telegram earlier this week from Municipal Affairs Minister Dr. Victor Goldbloom promising there would be no forced fusion in the West Island.

Demain

Référendum sur la fusion à Roxboro

(M.C.) — C'est demain que les citoyens de Roxboro se prononceront sur l'éventualité d'une fusion avec la ville voisine, Dollard-des-Ormeaux. Aucun mouvement d'opinion n'a encore permis de dé-

terminer avec certitude le choix qu'ils feront, conserver le statu quo ou devenir des citoyens de Dollard-des-Ormeaux.

Cette situation provient du fait que l'opinion sur cette question est

partagée au sein même du conseil municipal. Le maire de Roxboro, M. William Boll, s'est jusqu'ici fait l'ardent défenseur d'un statu quo, alors que les quatre conseillers de cette municipalité de

7,700 habitants prônent la fusion avec Dollard qui, elle, compte 36,000 habitants.

Arguments

Cette semaine, au cours d'une réunion à laquelle participaient environ 300 habitants de Roxboro, on a tenté de faire valoir les avantages d'une telle fusion. Le principal argument tend à démontrer que la nouvelle ville toucherait un montant supplémentaire de \$46,000 en vertu de la subvention provinciale de \$6 par habitant pour les villes de plus de 25,000 habitants. Lorsque la population dépasserait le cap des 50,000, elle pourrait alors toucher \$10 par habitant. A cette somme vient également s'ajouter un montant de \$3 par habitant que le gouvernement donne à toute nouvelle municipalité née d'une fusion.

Le maire Boll ne considère toutefois pas que ces subventions amélioreront le sort des citoyens de Roxboro puisqu'elles sont offertes pour aider les municipalités à défrayer

les coûts des services, coûts qui augmentent proportionnellement à la population.

Fusion

Si les citoyens de Roxboro votent contre la fusion avec Dollard-des-Ormeaux, demain, il n'est

cependant pas question que le ministère des Affaires municipales les oblige à se fusionner avec Pierrefonds. Le ministre Goldbloom a, une fois de plus, donné l'assurance cette semaine qu'il n'y aurait pas de fusion forcée.

Important référendum

Roxboro décidera aujourd'hui s'il se fusionnera oui ou non avec la ville de Dollard

Un important référendum se déroulera aujourd'hui, dimanche, dans la municipalité de Roxboro. Les propriétaires devront décider pour ou contre la fusion de leur municipalité avec la ville de Dollard. Il y a 1.840 propriétaires qui ont droit de vote, les locataires ne pouvant s'y prononcer en vertu de la loi. Le vote d'aujourd'hui mettra fin à une situation qui a divisé le conseil municipal de Roxboro, depuis plusieurs mois. Les quatre conseillers sont en faveur de la fusion, tandis que le maire, le Dr William Boll, s'y est toujours opposé. Ce dernier a laissé entendre en fin de semaine que près de 60 pour cent des propriétaires se prévaudraient de leur droit de vote.

Le référendum portera la question suivante: "Êtes-vous pour ou contre la fusion avec Dollard?"

De plus, les propriétaires devront également se prononcer sur les projets de construction d'une aréna de hockey et d'une piscine à l'extérieur. Les bureaux du scrutin seront ouverts de 9 heures, ce matin, à 7 heures, ce soir, et seront situés à l'école élémentaire Roxboro de la 11e Avenue. Si les propriétaires votent en faveur de la fusion, il faudra que les deux conseils, ceux de Roxboro et de Dollard, adoptent une pétition en ce sens pour la faire approuver par la Commission des Affaires municipales du Québec.

A l'heure actuelle, les deux municipalités ont une population de 44.000 âmes, dont 36.000 à Dollard. En cas de fusion, la nouvelle ville qui portera le nom de Dollard, aura une population de 50.000 en moins d'un an.

Elle pourra alors profiter de

subventions spéciales accordées par le gouvernement provincial à toutes les villes ayant une population d'au moins 50.000 âmes.

Selon le rapport préparé par des experts, la fusion serait fort profitable et pour les propriétaires de Roxboro et pour ceux de Dollard. Les premiers bénéficieraient d'une réduction de \$143.22 en taxes sur une maison évaluée à \$20.000, sur une période des cinq premières années, tandis que ceux de Dollard auraient une baisse de \$193.39.

Les conseillers de Roxboro ont laissé entendre que si les propriétaires se prononcent contre la fusion, ce qui semble peu probable, il faudra que Roxboro se fusionne avec Pierrefonds, dans un avenir fort rapproché.

'No' to joining Dollard

Roxboro votes down fusion

By BOB HAYES
of The Gazette

Roxboro residents don't want to become citizens of neighboring Dollard des Ormeaux.

They made the point clear yesterday when they voted overwhelmingly against a fusion of the two West Island municipalities.

More than 60 per cent of the town's 1,841 eligible electors turned out in a referendum that saw 776 'No' votes and 328 'Yes' votes recorded.

The results marked a victory for Mayor Dr. William Boll, who has branded the proposed merger as "senseless" since it first split the suburban council five months ago.

"It's a disease that hits Roxboro every 10 years and the residents have proved once again they don't want this type of fusion," he declared following the vote count.

He recalled that in 1964 Roxboro citizens turned down a City of Montreal move to launch its "one-island, one-city" concept. At that time 788 voters were opposed.

"I guess we'll have to wait for 1984 to see where the next bid comes from," Boll remarked.

The Roxboro mayor — a long-time advocate of merging all 11 West Island municipalities into a single city — said the "mini-merger" of Dollard and Roxboro "would have served no useful purpose."

QUARTET IN FAVOR

"There was no way I could stand up and tell the people to vote for a fusion that was neither rational or economical.

"The referendum has probably only served to confuse the fusion issue and throw doubt on any future mergers of this type," Boll stated.

The four councillors — Ted

Bjerkelund, Douglas Harding, Robert Surprenant, and John Salvis — have waged a bitter battle with Boll since November when a feasibility study showed certain financial advantages in favor of fusion.

The report claimed that provincial grants would save the average Roxboro homeowner \$193.39 over the next five years and in Dollard, the saving would amount to \$143.22.

The quartet of councillors didn't consider the decision a defeat, according to Surprenant.

"We felt that fusion was the right thing to do. So we gave the voters all the facts and said the decision is yours.

"The population deserved to be asked the question and we got the answer back," Surprenant stated.

Dollard Mayor Gerald Dephoure who was ready to welcome Roxboro's 7,635 into his

fast developing town said he "respected" the voters' decision.

"It would have provided a financial boost to all, but they're obviously in favor of going it alone," he said.

Dephoure said the two town councils could have submitted a joint petition of fusion to Quebec authorities without "going to the people."

"I'm pleased it was done this way and now we know where we stand."

TWO OTHERS

In two other referendum questions — referred to by Mayor Boll as "opinion polls" — voters favored construction of an outdoor heated swimming pool, 562-534, and opposed an indoor ice arena, 660-440.

Despite the pool poll, Boll said that residents would defeat a loan bylaw to finance the project. It would cost about \$500,000.

Roxboro demeurera une municipalité indépendante

par Bernard Descôteaux

Roxboro demeurera une municipalité indépendante et il ne sera plus question de fusion avec Dollard-des-Ormeaux. Les propriétaires de cette petite municipalité de l'ouest de l'île de Montréal en ont décidé ainsi par une forte majorité, hier, lors d'un référendum qui a donné lieu à une participation de 62,1 pour cent de la population.

C'est par une majorité de 448 voix, soit 776 votes contre et 328 pour, que les citoyens de Roxboro ont écarté l'idée d'une fusion volontaire avec Dollard-des-Ormeaux que défendaient depuis plus d'un an les quatre conseillers municipaux de Roxboro.

Le maire William Boll qui s'est opposé depuis le début à cette fusion s'est déclaré très heureux de l'issue de ce référendum, espérant que ce vote mettra fin à toute cette question qui, depuis longtemps, mobilisait les énergies du conseil. Il a précisé qu'il ne restait maintenant que sept mois pour faire disparaître les traces de ce conflit avant les prochaines élections municipales de novembre.

Les conseillers T. Bjerkelund, D. Harding, J. Salvis et R. Surprenant proposaient la fusion volontaire avec Dollard-des-Ormeaux pour éviter une fusion obligatoire, disaient-ils, qui serait imposée par Québec à la suite des recommandations du rapport Hannigan.

Ce rapport préparé par le président du comité exécutif de la Communauté urbaine de Montréal et qui est encore à l'étude par le gouvernement du Québec, proposait de ramener de 29 à 19 le nombre de municipalités sur l'île de Montréal. Il recommandait entre autres la fusion de Roxboro avec les municipalités de Pierrefonds, de Sainte-Geneviève et Ile-Bizard. Considérant que cette fusion était inévitable, les conseillers voulaient prendre de vitesse le gouvernement et réaliser une fusion qui aurait été plus profitable aux contribuables de Roxboro.

Pour sa part, le maire Boll prétendait

que Roxboro pouvait demeurer autonome, aucune fusion ne pouvant être imposée. Quelques jours avant la tenue du référendum, la position du maire était confirmée par le ministre des Affaires municipales qui affirmait que justement l'objet de la Loi sur les fusions volontaires était de rendre celles-ci volontaires.

A l'occasion de ce référendum, le conseil municipal avait décidé de consulter les citoyens de Roxboro sur la réalisation de deux projets d'ordre récréatif, soit la construction d'une piscine et d'un aréna. Le projet de piscine fut accepté par une faible majorité alors que la construction de l'aréna était rejetée. Il faut toutefois mentionner que ces deux ques-

tions n'avaient qu'un but consultatif et que le conseil pourrait en décider autrement s'il le jugeait opportun, ou encore présenter ces projets sous une forme différente.

Le conseiller Surprenant nous déclarait pour sa part, en fin de soirée, que le refus de la fusion avec Dollard-des-Ormeaux posera sûrement des problèmes dans l'avenir sur le plan des équipements récréatifs si en même temps les citoyens de Roxboro refusent de se doter d'un aréna et d'une piscine. Quant au projet de fusion, il s'est dit assuré d'avoir fait son devoir de conseiller en présentant ce projet.

Mayor Boll jubilant

Roxboro voters reject merger with Dollard

Roxboro property-owners yesterday voted 70.2 per cent against merging with the neighboring West Island suburb of Dollard des Ormeaux.

With 1,143 or 62.1 per cent of the 1,841 eligible property-owners voting, there were 328 ballots in favor, 776 opposed and 39 spoiled.

The results were a victory for Mayor William Boll, who led the opposition to the merger proposal, and a defeat for the town's four councillors, who had promoted the amalgamation as financially beneficial.

"It's what I predicted would happen," a jubilant Mr. Boll said following announcement of the results.

"I'm very much in favor of rational proposals for fusions," added the mayor, who strongly supported a proposal in the early 1970s for a merger of all 12 West Island suburbs.

"But we don't have any problems in Roxboro that would be solved by a merger with Dollard," he maintained.

He termed the anti-merger vote an expression of confidence in his administration by Roxboro citizens that made it probable he would run for re-election in November.

Mr. Boll was first elected mayor in 1964, after leading a campaign against Montreal's "one island — one city" bid to annex the suburb, which was decisively defeated in a similar merger referendum.

The urge to merge was "a disease that hits Roxboro once every 10 years," Mayor Boll observed.

He expressed the hope that the four town councillors would respect the "very clear-cut decision of the people" and permit council to resume constructive administration after months of unproductive squabbling.

Dollard Mayor Gerald Dephore declared last night that "we respect the decision that the citizens of Roxboro made. We've believed all along that it's a matter for them to decide for themselves."

He noted that adding Roxboro's 7,800 citizens to Dollard's 38,000 would have hastened the day when the suburb reached a population of 50,000, bringing a \$4 increase in the annual

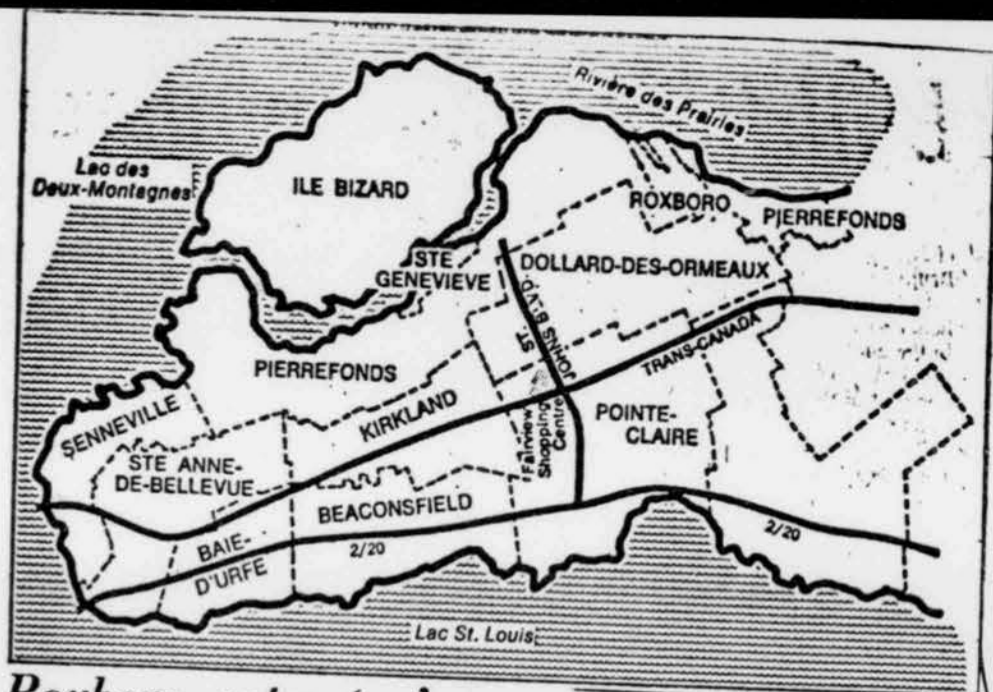
provincial per-capita grant.

Amalgamation would also have yielded administrative savings for both communities and brought a special provincial grant of \$3 per capita annually for the first five post-merger years, Mr. Dephore added.

Roxboro property-owners also voted yesterday in two advisory referendums on proposals for an indoor hockey arena and heated outdoor pool. The arena proposal was defeated 660-440, while the pool project was narrowly adopted by a 562-534 vote.

The referendum results left the future of both the pool and the arena "completely in the air," Mayor Boll said.

Council was faced with plans for a \$900,000 combined pool-arena project, and would have to submit a loan bylaw to finance either a combined project or the pool alone to the voters in any case, he noted.



Roxboro votes 'no' Suburban fusion needs co-action, not coercion

By BOB HAYES
of The Gazette

Just about one year ago, the Hannigan committee released a report on the future of the Montreal Urban Community. One of the recommendations in the 97-page report called for a reduction in the number of municipalities on Montreal Island from the present 29 to 19.

"In the future," the report read, "any voluntary amalgamation should be accomplished solely between adjacent municipalities located within the same consolidation sector."

Last Sunday the recommendation received its first real "voluntary" test. Taxpayers in the West Island town of Roxboro were asked in a referendum if they wanted to join forces with neighboring Dollard des Ormeaux.

The answer came through loud and clear — 70 per cent of those voting turned it down with an emphatic 'No'.

Both suburbs are in the same "West consolidation sector," comprising Pierrefonds, Ste. Geneviève, Ile Bizard, Dollard, Roxboro, Pointe Claire, Beaconsfield, Kirkland, Dorval, Ste. Anne de Bellevue, Baie d'Urfé, and Senneville.

'Senseless' proposal

Roxboro Mayor Dr. William Boll had, from the beginning, described the Dollard-Roxboro fusion proposal as "senseless." He claimed a victory when the votes were counted.

Roxboro's four councillors, who had pushed the merger as a financial windfall for the tiny community refused to admit defeat.

"We outlined the benefits that the town could expect from the fusion. We had an obligation to put them forward and let the taxpayers decide the issue," they explained.

More than 60 per cent of the electorate turned out at the polls — an unusually high percentage in any suburban referendum — and delivered the answer.

If it was a victory for Mayor Boll, it would have to be considered a defeat for another, Municipal Affairs Minister Victor Goodbloom. The man who is responsible for guiding municipal re-organization in the province, has promised there will be no "forced" fusions.

The anti-Boll councillor forces had suggested that if Roxboro residents didn't agree to become one with Dollard, they would soon be

forced to join with adjacent Pierrefonds.

Goodbloom answered with a telegram, reiterating his stand that no municipality would be pushed into a merger unless the citizens concerned were in agreement.

Hard to convince

As one West Island mayor commented: "No matter what kind of financial carrots are dangled in front of taxpayers, they aren't easily convinced."

"If a community is well-administered, it's hard to convince the people who pay the tax bills that they'll be any better off in a larger town."

"You might say citizens find it hard to trust politicians. They were told a couple of years ago that integrated police protection would only cost \$46 million a year and now it's well over \$100 and still climbing," the mayor remarked.

It has been suggested that by combining municipal services such as water and sewers, snow removal, garbage disposal, recreation, planning, and administration processes the taxpayers will come out a winner.

With rising costs in all sectors of the economy, there's no way a homeowner can be told his tax bill will show a certain reduction in 1979. He doesn't believe it will even happen next year.

Major amalgamation

Mayor Boll, while strongly opposed to the "mini merger", still stands by his repeated call for a single city in the West Island, incorporating all 12 municipalities.

"This fusion business can't be done on a piece-by-piece basis. We should look at the whole picture and if total merger is the answer, let's go ahead with it."

"The individual towns would retain their names in wards and the local community spirit which is so important would not disappear," Boll emphasized.

Dr. Goodbloom appears to have lost the initial round in his bid for a first voluntary merger on the island. At the same time he continues to urge greater co-ordination and co-operation among neighboring towns.

The Dollard-Roxboro answer, though, may be a warning for the minister to step softly — citizens may be ready to co-operate, but they won't be coerced.

Mergers — a matter of law not option, says Hanigan

Montreal Urban Community (MUC) Chairman Lawrence Hanigan was not surprised when residents of Roxboro recently voted overwhelmingly against a merger with Dollard des Ormeaux.

"Voluntary mergers are extremely difficult to achieve. If the provincial government wants to reduce the number of municipalities and create larger units, it seems there is only one way: by law," Hanigan said yesterday on CJAD radio's Civic Report.

"The minute you hold a referendum, most people vote against merger. If a referendum had been held I'm pretty sure the City of Laval would never have been born," said Hanigan.

Laval, which covers Ile Jesus just northwest of the Montreal island, was created Aug. 6, 1965 when the Quebec government effected a merger of 14 separate municipalities.

Laval overnight became the province's second largest city with a population of more than 170,000.

The only alternative to enforcing a merger, said Hanigan, is for the government to offer incentives encouraging people to vote for one.

"The per capita grant now offered is not sufficient," he said.

PIERREFONDS ET DOLLARD-DES-ORMEAUX À QUELQUES PAS DE LA FUSION TOTALE

Les conseils municipaux de Pierrefonds et Dollard-des-Ormeaux, en banlieue ouest de Montréal, sont sur le point de donner le feu vert à ce qu'on pourrait appeler l'avant-projet de la fusion totale.

En effet, les deux municipalités auraient décidé de confier à leurs vérificateurs, la firme Thorne Riddell, le mandat d'étudier les implications financières et administratives de la fusion totale. Les deux villes se partageront le coût de l'étude évaluée à \$30,000. L'étape ultérieure, avant la fusion, consisterait en l'adoption d'un règlement de fusion volontaire par les deux conseils municipaux et l'acceptation du projet conjoint par la population.

Depuis deux ans, les ambitions des maires C.A. McDonald, de Pierrefonds, et Jean Cournoyer, de Dollard-des-Ormeaux, sont bien connues et elles semblent plaire aux membres des deux conseils municipaux. A un tel point, d'ailleurs, que les dirigeants municipaux des deux villes ont posé des gestes concrets dans le passé, gestes qui devraient permettre de conclure l'entente finale.

Ainsi, on a intégré les deux cours municipales, uniformisé les règlements municipaux, fusionné certains aspects de la lutte contre les incendies et des travaux publics: quant au service de police, il est le même pour toutes les villes de l'île. Selon l'hebdomadaire local «Cités Nouvelles», c'est au mois de juillet que le conseil municipal de Dollard-des-Ormeaux prendra position définitivement dans cette marche vers la fusion, à l'invitation de Pierrefonds. Le *Journal* presume que la majorité des membres du conseil de Dollard-des-Ormeaux sont favorables à la fusion et l'on connaît déjà très bien les opinions du maire Cournoyer sur le sujet.

75,000 habitants

Au train où vont les choses, la nouvelle ville de l'ouest pourrait voir le jour rapidement. Il s'agirait alors de la plus importante dans le secteur «West Island» avec une population de 75,000 habitants (Pierrefonds: 36,900; Dollard-des-Ormeaux: 38,300) et l'une des plus importantes dans l'île de Montréal puisqu'elle aurait une taille et une population à peu près comparables à celles de Verdun, Montréal-Nord, Saint-Laurent, Saint-Léonard. Cette nouvelle ville pourrait toujours, dans un deuxième temps, tenter d'influencer les administrations de Roxboro et Ste-Geneviève qui sont des enclaves, toutes deux, dans la ville de Pierrefonds. Roxboro a une population de 7000 habitants tandis que Ste-Geneviève compte environ 3000 âmes.

Les maires Cournoyer et McDonald ont fait preuve de sagesse dans leur démarche. L'histoire des fusions pénibles au Québec leur enseignait de ne pas présenter un projet global à la population, mais plutôt d'identifier les secteurs (services et administration) ou une collaboration permanente pouvait prendre forme. C'est ce qui a été fait avec le résultat que les deux villes ne sont pas loin, aujourd'hui, d'être fusionnées, ou presque!

Ce que craignent les administrations municipales et les populations, dans un projet de fusion, c'est la hausse des taxes qui entraînent souvent, et paradoxalement, une baisse de la qualité des services. Jusqu'à maintenant, ce ne semble pas être le cas à Pierrefonds et Dollard-des-Ormeaux. D'ailleurs, on a rarement assisté à une telle démarche vers la fusion de deux importantes municipalités sans que des groupes de citoyens bondissent pour faire la lumière sur les aspects négatifs d'un tel projet. Ce n'est justement pas le cas dans les deux villes. Les contribuables n'ont pas encore explosé de mécontentement et rien n'indique qu'ils agiront ainsi.