

# The Emergence of Metropolitan Government in Greater Vancouver\*

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Just after midsummer day in 1967 a new arrival appeared in the field of British Columbia local government. The event was a quiet one. No formal ceremony took place. No politician stepped forward to claim parentage or to foretell a long and successful life for the new arrival. The event took place under the cloak of administrative obscurity and the new arrival was given a name so unrelated to local tradition that those hearing it would likely soon forget it, or at least be no wiser about the new arrival. It was called the Regional District of Fraser-Burrard. Now, five years later, it is apparent that the new body (its name in the meantime having been changed to the Greater Vancouver Regional District) is evolving into metropolitan government,<sup>1</sup> of the local federation variety, for greater Vancouver — a development which was intended from the beginning by the few key provincial officials who were responsible for the “regional district” concept in British Columbia. In this study we discuss the origin and early growth of metropolitan government in greater Vancouver. More particularly, we seek to place this development in the context of British Columbia local government, to analyze the aims and strategies of

\* We are grateful to GVRD Directors and staff, and to officials of the British Columbia Department of Municipal Affairs, for granting interviews and information on which this study is based. We acknowledge with appreciation that a number of the interviews were conducted by students in the 1970 Urban Politics Seminar, University of British Columbia. An earlier draft of this paper was presented to the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, St. John's, June 1971. Although most of the information has been updated, the paper does not take account of developments in the GVRD which have taken place since June 1971.

<sup>1</sup> Although a set of universally accepted criteria for defining the term “metropolitan government” does not exist, the creation of supra-municipal urban governments for the Toronto and Winnipeg areas has provided a commonly accepted meaning for the term in the Canadian context. It might be argued, especially from the town planning point of view, that this meaning is not applicable to the GVRD since less than half its territory is now urban; from this point of view the term “regional government” might be preferred. However, since the bulk of the presently affected population is urban, and since urbanization is spreading rapidly into the presently agrarian and undeveloped areas, we believe that the term is appropriate. Certainly from the political and administrative point of view the GVRD belongs to the same class as the metropolitan government which existed in Winnipeg until January 1972 and which still exists in Toronto.

the provincial officials, to indicate the responses of the local officials, and to describe the resulting institutions and procedures which now make up the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD). Since the early growth stage has been characterized by the setting up of institutions and procedures, we are concerned essentially with decision making about the GVRD rather than with decision making by the GVRD.<sup>2</sup>

*Regional Government in Greater Vancouver before 1967*

By 1900 there were more than a dozen towns at the mouth of the Fraser River and around Burrard Inlet, with Vancouver City having become the business and financial centre of the region. Although there has never been an official definition of "greater Vancouver," the Dominion Bureau of Statistics provided a definition used for census purposes in 1931 and subsequently. This entity, most of whose population would be eventually included in the area of the GVRD, contained some 350,000 persons in 1931, some 829,000 in 1961, and in 1971 approximately 1,100,000 persons — about half the provincial population. Over the years a number of regional authorities were established to serve the area. In 1914 the Greater Vancouver Sewerage and Drainage District was formed and in 1926 it was joined by the Greater Vancouver Water District. These two authorities were always separate legal entities but they had a common staff under one director. Ultimately the Sewerage District had 14 municipal members while the Water District had 15. Between 1936 and 1948 four boards of health were established, each serving several municipalities and, unlike any other authorities, serving school boards as well. In 1948 the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board was established for the entire lower Fraser Valley — an area including, but much larger than, the greater Vancouver area. The Planning Board, which eventually served 28 municipalities, including all those in the greater Vancouver area, succeeded in producing a regional plan for the entire lower Fraser Valley. In 1966 the Greater Vancouver Parks District was formed to serve 11 municipalities, most of them in the greater Vancouver area: its responsibilities were confined to purchasing land for future park use. In early 1967 the Greater Vancouver Hospital District was created to administer hospital construction in the area. With the exceptions of the Water District and the Hospital District, both of which were formed essentially at the initiative of the provincial government, the authorities

<sup>2</sup> That the GVRD does not yet have an actual governmental role is a major conditioning factor, affecting the perceptions of both the public and municipalities in greater Vancouver.

were formed upon local initiative, with the provincial statutes merely legitimizing local intentions. All the Boards had a simple, similar structure. A board of directors was composed of delegates from municipal councils; a board chairman was selected from among its members by the board. Each authority had its own staff under the direction of a permanent official. In each case the formal creation and granting of authority were effected through provincial legislation. Individual municipalities, however, were left free to decide whether to participate in and be affected by the decisions of any authority.

A number of generalizations may be made about the creation, structure, and operation of these regional authorities. First, there is the basic point that the regional authorities became accepted as an established part of the local government structure. Second, the instances of provincial initiative in establishing such bodies were sufficiently few that there was no noticeable tendency among local leaders to fear provincial imposition; at the same time, the practice of using provincial legislation to legitimize regional authorities was accepted by local leaders. Third, the practice of allowing individual municipalities the freedom to decide whether to participate in and be affected by the performance of any regional function served to reinforce the belief in provincial benevolence among local leaders and to lessen any fear on the part of smaller municipalities in the region that they might be dominated by the larger ones.<sup>3</sup> Fourth, the weak chairman, weak executive form of board structure within the regional authorities precluded the possibility that particular municipal representatives might attain positions of significant influence — thus lessening further the probability of inter-municipal rivalries at the regional level but also enhancing the position of the permanent officials in charge of the administrative staff. Fifth, the functions performed were essentially technical and therefore non-controversial and non-threatening to municipal leaders.<sup>4</sup> Sixth, even though there was no “logical” reason for it, the practice of having legally separate authorities with a common administrative staff had a long-standing precedent in the case of the Sewerage and Water Boards. Finally, a particular terminology had emerged — the terms “greater Vancouver,” “regional,” “district” and “board” were in common usage among local and provincial officials and were devoid of threatening implication. Each term was commonly understood in a

<sup>3</sup> The notion of individual option was contradicted only in the case of the Hospital District, the authority created shortly before the GVRD was established.

<sup>4</sup> The significant exception was provided by the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board — its function impinged on basic municipal decision-making and became both controversial and threatening to local leaders.

general sense, yet literal meanings varied from authority to authority, with the specific and therefore vital term in each formal name relating to the function performed: "sewerage and drainage," "water," "health," "planning," "parks" and "hospitals."<sup>5</sup> Each of these seven features appears to us to have been significant in affecting the strategies, perceptions, and reactions related to the introduction of regional districts generally in British Columbia, and to the creation and development of the GVRD in particular.

### *The 1957 Attempt at Metropolitan Government*

In the late 1950's the British Columbia Department of Municipal Affairs attempted to introduce metropolitan government in greater Vancouver. In 1957 enabling legislation, taking the form of an addition to the *Municipal Act* entitled "Metropolitan Areas,"<sup>6</sup> empowered the Minister to "direct the Councils of two or more adjacent municipalities to set up a Joint Committee to study and report on such matters of an intermunicipal nature as shall be set out by the Minister in his directive."<sup>7</sup> Each such committee was to have two members appointed by each municipality affected, and an additional member, who was to be the Chairman, appointed by the Minister. If a Joint Committee reported that a metropolitan area<sup>8</sup> should be established, the Minister was empowered, although not compelled, to "direct the Councils of the municipalities recommended to be included in the metropolitan area to hold a referendum based on the report . . . to ascertain the opinion of the electors. . . ."<sup>9</sup> If a majority of those voting in each of at least two-thirds of the municipalities voted in favour of the formation of a metropolitan area, the Lieutenant-Governor in Council could incorporate the area "in substantial accordance with the report."<sup>10</sup>

Although the legislation was general in nature, it was clearly directed towards the greater Vancouver area. Soon after the passage of the legislation, a Joint Committee was formed for the greater Vancouver area

<sup>5</sup> Thus the term "Greater Vancouver Regional District" was, and largely remains, a term devoid of specific meaning; unlike, for example, a term such as "the Corporation of Metropolitan Vancouver."

<sup>6</sup> *Municipal Act*, 1957, Chapter 42, Sections 772-805.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, Section 773.

<sup>8</sup> A metropolitan area was defined in the legislation in terms of structure and procedures similar to those of the then existing single-purpose regional authorities. The formal entity was to be called "The Corporation of Metropolitan \_\_\_\_\_". *Ibid.*, Section 776.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, Section 774.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, Section 775.

with 22 members from 11 municipalities and with Mr. Hugo Ray as Chairman. In its report of 1960 the Committee recommended the formation of a metropolitan area. However, no further action was ever taken. The municipal members of the Committee did not seek in any concerted, or indeed, individual, way to advocate any further steps, while Mr. Ray, who was a strong advocate, died shortly after the Committee submitted its report. In addition, the Minister did not act to build upon any impetus which the Committee may have established — and in any case the provincial and local officials were at least in agreement that the required referendum would fail.

Essentially, the 1957 attempt was fostered by senior civil servants in the provincial Department of Municipal Affairs. The Minister of that time took no active public or, it would seem, private part, in promoting the idea. The attempt involved a large amount of local public scrutiny and decision-making in forming a metropolitan corporation, as shown in the fact that a study committee and public referendum were compulsory prerequisites to any final action by the provincial government. One might hypothesize that the senior civil servants, lacking the active support of the Minister, were either in no position to succeed in imposing major changes upon the Greater Vancouver municipalities, or else simply did not believe it appropriate to use provincial authority to compel municipalities along new avenues. The former hypothesis seems justified in light of developments in the late 1960's; the latter seems justified in light of previous regional developments in greater Vancouver. In any case, the 1957 failure had significant influence on the regionalization strategies pursued by the provincial Department in the mid-1960's.

#### *Local Government Ideology in British Columbia*

The Greater Vancouver Regional District is merely one of the twenty-eight regional districts into which the entire province (excepting only a small section in the uninhabited northwest corner) has been divided since 1965. There is no special legislation applying to greater Vancouver. This circumstance (which, incidentally, sets greater Vancouver in its provincial context apart from the other major Canadian metropolitan cities in their provincial contexts) compels the paying of some attention to the regional district concept generally in British Columbia in order to place the GVRD in proper perspective. At first sight, it appears surprising that British Columbia should have proceeded to complete regionalization at such an early stage in provincial development. In 1965, the provincial population was less than two million and there existed in the province only some

140 municipalities and some 100 inter-municipal regional authorities. Furthermore, the municipalities were treading on each other's toes less than might be expected, since less than one per cent of the province's land area was within municipal jurisdiction. The explanation for British Columbia's low response threshold, it may be suggested, lies more in the realm of ideas than in any compelling force of immediate circumstance. Put another way, certain political and administrative leaders in the province were able to anticipate problems and to set about establishing means of dealing with those problems before concern developed among either local municipal leaders or the public. At the same time, the perception of problems and the formulation of solutions were affected by the basic political values which guide public decision makers in the province. We would identify these basic values as centring upon the goals of material economy and efficiency in the provision of governmental services.<sup>11</sup> These goals would seem to be held as strongly by the local leaders in British Columbia as by the officials in the provincial Department of Municipal Affairs. Technology, especially transportation technology, and population growth, both essentially impersonal concepts, are mentioned more frequently than any other concepts as being the prime causative factors leading to the need for co-ordination within regions. The goals of securing better relations between citizen and government, especially in the form of better access and representation during a time of social change, are mentioned hardly at all. Thus the actual developments which have occurred in the GVRD and other districts have emphasized structural or institutional innovation rather than changes in decision-making procedures or in selection, accountability, and participatory processes. In terms of comparative categories, the dominant goals which do find expression fit into what have been identified in America as "the traditional reform-movement emphasis" and which has been in that country borne by small numbers of leaders rather than by popular movements.<sup>12</sup> Contemporary local government reform in British Columbia is thus similar to a particular American variety which had its heyday some decades ago.

Since his taking office in early 1964 the present Minister of Municipal Affairs has consistently singled out and criticized the proliferation of special purpose boards at the supra-municipal level as inefficient and undesirable. For example, in his first address to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) the Minister stated:

<sup>11</sup> For one discussion of this concept, see Charles R. Adrian and Charles Press, *Governing Urban America* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968), 79-83.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 279.

In any definable trading area can the functions of regional planning, regional water and sewer utilities, regional parks, regional garbage disposal, regional hospital needs, regional health and regional welfare continue to be solved through a proliferation of single function regional boards with few if any definable inter-relationships?<sup>13</sup>

This statement, along with many similar ones contained in press releases, speeches and statements by the Minister since 1964, is puzzling in light of the actual paucity of regional special purpose authorities in the province. In 1964, greater Vancouver, the only large urban region in the province, had, as we have indicated, only six special purpose regional authorities: The Sewerage and Drainage District and the Water District, which may be counted as one; the four sub-regional boards of health; and the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board. No one has suggested that major co-ordinating problems existed among these bodies; none of the local officials we have interviewed has pointed to such problems nor has the Minister himself ever identified such problems.

It may be that the Minister's repeated emphasis on the undesirability of special purpose boards has been directed more towards the future than towards the contemporary situation, and has been intended first to reduce the number of requests which might come to him for the creation of such bodies and secondly to weaken the legitimacy of special purpose authorities which were already in existence. In any case, in retrospect, it is clear that almost immediately upon taking office the Minister was persuaded of the worth of the regional district concept. Since this concept involves essentially the existence of a single authority responsible for all regional functions, strong and numerous single purpose regional boards are incompatible with its implementation. Thus, if we are correct in identifying the goals of economy and efficiency as the dominant values held by those involved in local government in British Columbia, it would seem that these abstract values themselves, as interpreted by the Minister, were a prime factor in the adoption of the regional district concept. Certainly, there were no immediate practical problems of such a magnitude that consideration of them led to the notion of regional government as a means towards economy and efficiency.

On the face of it, advocacy of multi-purpose regional authorities might be taken as an attempt to reduce the role and significance of established municipalities — for, if it is inefficient and uneconomic to have regional

<sup>13</sup> UBCM, *Minutes of the 61st Annual Convention* (New Westminster, B.C.: UBCM, 1964), 108. Cited hereafter as UBCM, *1964 Convention*. The addresses of the Minister to the UBCM are recognized as being the most important annual policy statements by the Minister.

functional fragmentation, it would seem equally so to have geographic fragmentation. Such an interpretation, however, cannot be supported in light of a literal reading of the Minister's public statements. That such an interpretation is not supported by public evidence would, again, seem puzzling, since in other places arguments for regional and metropolitan government have usually stressed geographic fragmentation at least as much as functional fragmentation. As Banfield and Grodzins observe:

In many discussions of metropolitan organization there is a strong bias towards simplicity, uniformity, and symmetry of structure. It is often taken for granted that the presence of a large number of independent local governments in a single area means waste and duplication.<sup>14</sup>

The puzzling aspects diminish, however, when one perceives that the Minister's criticism of the proliferation of single purpose authorities is closely related to a particular view of community which is, in one fundamental way, different from that of local municipal leaders in the province. The Minister, his senior officials, and local leaders are as one in rejecting a populist view of community (in which the goals of economy and efficiency would be outweighed by the values of access and accountability) and in upholding the view of community as a unified corporate whole. A multiplicity of special purpose authorities is abhorred not only because it is seen as inefficient and uneconomic, but also because it violates the notion of the community as a unified whole. The Minister has made several statements such as the following:

The dozens, and in some cases hundreds, of special, single interest boards, agencies, commissions which have sapped the strength and purpose from community government in the U.S.A. have not developed here . . . here in British Columbia, the COMMUNITY IS THE THING.<sup>15</sup>

However, if what might be termed the ideological view of community is shared by provincial and local officials, the view as to what constitutes a community today in British Columbia is not. It is readily apparent that local leaders perceive the existing municipalities as the actual communities in the province. A casual review of municipal leadership in the Vancouver area indicates that the great majority of both elected and appointed officials have spent the entirety of their careers within their own municipalities. These leaders identify strongly with the traditions and institutional positions within their municipalities. An examination of the

<sup>14</sup> Edward C. Banfield and Morton Grodzins, *Government and Housing in Metropolitan Areas* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1958), 155.

<sup>15</sup> UBCM, *1964 Convention*, 109. Emphasis in original.



statements and actions of the provincial officials, however, makes it quite clear that the present Minister and his officials do not view the established urban municipalities as meaningful communities (the case would appear to be different for many rural municipalities). The Minister has concerned himself hardly at all with existing municipalities; his attack on single purpose boards has been entirely at the regional level — not once in any of his published statements has he indicated any concern over such boards within municipalities, even though they are there much more common than at the inter-municipal level. In 1967, the Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs stated that:

Changing technologies have changed the constraints upon local government. When the only way to get about was either by foot or by horse-drawn vehicle, an urban community could be only a certain size. . . . Now there are no constraints other than time. There are no clearly defined urban boundaries. You cannot find a boundary, a natural boundary, for an urban community at all. They have been obliterated. This rather dramatic change in the last twenty years has brought about quite a revolution in the political situation you require to deal with it.<sup>16</sup>

To summarize, it appears that both local and provincial officials concerned with local government share a set of basic beliefs about government and community. They accept economy and efficiency in the provision of material services as a basic governmental value, and they see the community as properly a unified corporate whole. Both factors provide attitudinal support for the pejorative view of proliferation of single purpose authorities. (In addition, both factors are associated with the trustee style of leadership rather than one which emphasizes popular participation.) Local and provincial officials, however, differ sharply in their perception of the basis of urban community in British Columbia today. Local officials accept the established urban municipality as the appropriate unit of community; provincial officials do not.

### *The Provincial Strategy for Regional Government in the 1960's*

The provincial administrative apparatus concerned with municipal affairs has always been minimal in British Columbia. The office of Inspector of Municipalities was created in 1914 in order that the province might oversee the financial aspects of local government; the Department

<sup>16</sup> Address to the Urban Politics Seminar, University of British Columbia, March 1967.

of Municipal Affairs was formed in 1934 — since that time, the Deputy Minister of the Department has also been Inspector of Municipalities. In 1965, the Department consisted of some 30 officials divided among four divisions: Administration, Finance, Housing, and Planning. Despite this formal division of responsibilities within it, the Department, because of its small size and because all officials were stationed in Victoria, was essentially non-bureaucratic, with the Minister and Deputy Minister able to know the entire staff and to be fully conversant with departmental matters. The influence structure within the Department is therefore especially difficult for outsiders to assess and describe, since the rapid and free state of communication allowed ideas to come and go easily with no record of source or development left in their wake. As far as regional government is concerned, however, even publicly available information (such as the 1957 attempt at metropolitan government) makes it clear that by the mid-1950's the senior civil servants were persuaded that some initial steps should be taken towards metropolitan government in the greater Vancouver area. Subsequently, the idea appeared within the Department that regional government should be got under way throughout the province. In March, 1964, a new Minister was appointed who quickly distinguished himself from his predecessors by participating fully in Departmental policy-making and by committing himself to implementation of the regional district concept. Seven years later it is apparent that his major effort as Minister has been to establish the structure for regional government in British Columbia. By June 1964 — that is, only four months after the appointment of the new Minister — the basic goals and strategies for regionalization had been formulated within the Department. The basic goal was to extend local (perhaps "sub-provincial" would be a more descriptive term) government to the entire province. At its most general, the strategy of the Minister and his Department rested on what might be called "gentle imposition" of Departmental ideas upon local leaders. Subsequently, the actual process would be marked throughout by the Minister's own personality and political style — his stance toward local leaders would be that of the self-assured schoolmaster who wishes his charges to progress to self-sufficiency along predetermined paths. By turns he would practice suggestion, persuasion, and cajolery, while always leaving open the possibility of compulsion should lesser methods fail. The dullards would be lulled by the banalities which would always camouflage the bald truths. In his first address to the Union of B.C. Municipalities (UBCM) he stated:

“You will either get what you want or come to want what you get.” In short, I believe we can together rationalize our regional problems here in British Columbia. . . .<sup>17</sup>

The more specific elements of the provincial strategy may be analyzed in terms of the tradition of single purpose authorities, of the legacy of the 1957 attempt at metropolitan government for Vancouver, and of the differing provincial and local views of the contemporary urban community. In the first place, every effort was made by the provincial officials to identify the new regional district concept as a logical emanation of the traditional pattern of single purpose regional authorities; the qualitative distinction between the existence of several separate single purpose authorities and one multi-purpose authority was invariably glossed over in statements by the Minister and his officials. The regional district concept was presented essentially as a tidying-up of the regional governmental scene. Second, the fact of provincial initiative was concealed to a large degree by extensive consultation with local leaders. At least three aspects of this consultation are identifiable.

1. In June 1964, the Minister and his senior staff informed the UBCM executive of Departmental proposals; these proposals were discussed at this time, as well as later at the September 1964, UBCM annual meeting.
2. During the summer and fall of 1964, the Department formed an ad hoc advisory group consisting of local leaders from five municipalities (Victoria, Esquimalt, Oak Bay, Saanich and Sidney), and several neighbouring unincorporated rural areas in the area of the provincial capital. In effect, the advisory group was used as a simulation of a governing body in a future regional district — crucially, one in which urban and rural leaders would work together, as would be the case with most actual regional districts. In consultation with this advisory group, departmental officials prepared the draft legislation.
3. After passage of the legislation in early 1965, the Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs and several other senior departmental officials travelled throughout the province conducting “workshop sessions” on the new legislation with local leaders.

The tradition related to single purpose regional authorities in which individual municipalities enjoyed the freedom to decide whether to par-

<sup>17</sup> UBCM, *1964 Convention*, 108. Ostensibly the first sentence was from George Bernard Shaw.

ticipate and be affected was continued under the new legislation. Under the so called "opting out" provision, a municipality or unincorporated area would not participate in any designated function of a regional district if a majority of owner-electors voted against such participation. The necessary referendum was to be held in a municipality at the option of the council; in an unincorporated area, at the request of ten per cent of land owners.<sup>18</sup> Undoubtedly, this provision served to minimize local fears of provincial imposition and fears of smaller municipalities and unincorporated areas about domination by neighbouring larger municipalities.

Fourth, the tradition of having indirect election and the weak executive, weak chairman form of board structure was also continued in the new legislation. Membership on the regional board would, however, be proportionate to population, and board members from unincorporated areas would be directly elected. Finally, the terminology of the regional district legislation was taken directly from the tradition of single purpose authorities. We have previously mentioned that the term "regional district" was in common use in greater Vancouver, although always coupled to a functionally-specific term. The same was true in other parts of the province. Under the new legislation, the term "regional district" was devoid of functional specificity, and thus, it would appear to us, devoid of particular connotation, threatening or otherwise. Even now in British Columbia only the most adept observer can twist his tongue around the "the" in "the regional district" sufficiently to distinguish the district from the other districts in an area. In fact, a conscious decision was made to avoid the terms "metropolitan", "regional government" and "county," because of negative connotations bred in past experience. We have little doubt that use of the non-specific but familiar term in such a basic way under the new legislation was a deliberate measure intended both to cloak the new entity in familiar garments and to discourage those not intimately familiar with actual developments from becoming cognizant of the potential change towards a new form of government.

The preceding point relates as well to the elements in the provincial strategy resulting from the failure of the 1957 provincial attempt to introduce metropolitan government in Vancouver, for at that time the term "The Corporation of Metropolitan Vancouver" would have been applied. The regionalization attempt in 1965 differed from the 1957 attempt in two more basic ways. First, no provision at all was made for local study committees or for local referenda on the question of whether a regional district would be formed. (In other words, there could be "opting out" of

<sup>18</sup> *Municipal Act*, 1965, Section 766.

any or all functions, but not of membership in the district.) Instead, the Lieutenant-Governor in Council, on the recommendation of the Minister, was empowered to issue letters patent to incorporate a regional district, to set its boundaries, and to assign its functions. The second difference has lain in the Minister's frequent and specific claim that regional districts are not, and will not become, metropolitan or "fourth level" governments. (Indeed, only in 1970 did the Minister begin to use the word "government" in the regional context.) This claim has rested essentially on the facts that regional districts have no power to levy taxes on citizens, and that district board members are not directly elected.<sup>19</sup> This claim has never been publicly challenged within British Columbia, even though, as even the most casual student of local government knows, there are many recognized metropolitan governments, including Toronto's, which neither tax directly nor are elected directly. Indeed, the 1957 legislation in British Columbia provided for neither direct taxation nor direct election. The belief that regional districts in the urban context do not have the potential to become metropolitan governments thus must be seen as a legitimizing myth within the context of B.C. politics.<sup>20</sup> Myth or not, the Minister's success in avoiding the identification of regional districts with metropolitan or "fourth level" government has been a crucial one; for his claim that no new government is being created, no matter how the academic may scoff, has been accepted by local leaders and so they have not perceived the regional districts as inimical to established municipalities. Of course, other factors than the Minister's claims (chiefly the shared "economy and efficiency" values) have contributed to the municipal acquiescence, but the Minister and his colleagues have succeeded in forestalling any significant development of the perception that the regional district concept is threatening to local community.

### *The Formation of the GVRD*

As we have stated earlier, the actual creation of the Regional District for the Vancouver area was a most innocuous event. By the time of its creation more than two years had passed since the passage of the regional

<sup>19</sup> British Columbia, Department of Municipal Affairs, "Regional Districts," (Mimeo., September 1965). The "opting-out" provision was of course a substantial departure from the concept of metropolitan government and was so described by the Minister in support of his claim. However, he did not change his claim even when the "opting out" provision was abolished in 1970.

<sup>20</sup> The Minister once stated that regional districts were "an alternative to metro government [which] does the same job as metro government." *Vancouver Sun*, September 10, 1968.

district legislation and thirteen other regional districts had already been created. (The first had been created on August 19, 1965, in the area of the Minister's own legislative riding on Vancouver Island.) Although the provincial officials would undoubtedly have seen to the creation of the Vancouver District in this general period, the actual triggering event for its creation in late June 1967 was the formation shortly before of the Greater Vancouver Regional Hospital District — presumably the last single-purpose regional authority to be created in the area. The Minister had imposed this authority as the culmination of many years of disagreement over hospital construction co-ordination and financing — but the creation of a single-purpose authority seemed to fly in the face of many of the Minister's own previous statements and actions. The solution to this difficulty, or one which at least proved satisfactory in practice, was the issue of letters patent creating the GVRD,<sup>21</sup> and the giving of identical structure and membership to the Hospital District and the new Regional District. Since the inception of the GVRD, this duality has continued — like M.P.s who may be meeting as either the Commons proper or as the Committee of the Whole, municipal representatives in greater Vancouver may be meeting as either the Hospital District Board or as the Regional District Board. (In spite of this legerdemain, the function of hospital construction is commonly regarded locally as one administered by the GVRD.)

The *Municipal Act* provides that "voting power and representation on the Regional Board" is to be based upon a "voting unit" designated in the letters patent creating the district.<sup>22</sup> For the GVRD, this voting unit is 20,000 persons. The number of votes a member municipality or unincorporated area is entitled to is obtained by dividing its population by the voting unit — if the resulting quotient includes a fraction the number of votes is taken as the next highest number. The number of representatives (they are styled "directors") from a member municipality or unincorporated area is obtained by dividing its number of votes by five — with the number of directors taken as the next highest number if the quotient includes a fraction. Thus each member municipality or unincorporated area is guaranteed a minimum of one vote and one director. Votes are to be distributed as evenly as possible among directors and a director may not split his votes.<sup>23</sup> Thus, Vancouver City is entitled to 22 votes and five

<sup>21</sup> Which, as we have mentioned, was at first called the Regional District of Fraser-Burrard.

<sup>22</sup> *Municipal Act*, 1965, Sections 765, 770.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, Section 770.

directors, with three directors having four votes each and two directors having five votes. Voting power and representation are to be adjusted after each decennial census. Directors from municipalities must be council members; they are appointed annually by their councils. Directors from unincorporated areas are directly elected for a two-year term. The 1972 representation and voting power on the GVRD Board is shown in the accompanying table. The results of the 1971 census will, of course, bring adjustments. The only changes since formation of the District have been the addition in 1968 of the unincorporated area of IOCO-Buntzen and in 1971 the addition of the Village of Lion's Bay, which was incorporated within the IOCO-Buntzen area, thus leaving IOCO-Buntzen with virtually no population, and the amalgamation of Fraser Mills with Port Coquitlam.

TABLE 1  
GVRD REPRESENTATION 1972

<i>Member</i>	<i>1972 Population</i>	<i>Number of Directors</i>	<i>Number of Votes</i>
Vancouver	422,300	5	22
Burnaby	125,000	2	7
Surrey	96,700	1	5
Richmond	61,400	1	4
North Vancouver District	57,200	1	3
Coquitlam District	52,200	1	3
New Westminster	42,100	1	3
West Vancouver	36,300	1	2
North Vancouver City	42,000	1	3
Delta	45,200	1	3
Port Coquitlam	19,600	1	1
White Rock	10,300	1	1
Port Moody	10,800	1	1
Lion's Bay	400	1	1
Unincorporated Areas:			
University Endowment Lands	3,550	1	1
Bowen Island	950	1	1
IOCO-Buntzen	218	1	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,016,375</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>61</b>

\*1971 Population Estimate.

### *The Acquisition of Functions*

Once the formation of regional districts had been substantially completed throughout the province, the "opting out" provision of the 1965 legislation was eliminated. This fundamental change, although it was welcomed by the provincial officials, originated in part within several of the regional districts, including the GVRD. Thus, in effect, within a short period of time, the development of multi-purpose boards at the regional level in the province progressed to the point that the extreme municipal freedom to "opt out" of regional functions was rejected by several of the regional district boards. In 1968 the GVRD Board formed a special committee to study the political and administrative structure of the District. In its report of February 20, 1969, the committee stated:

The Regional District must adopt the concept of a multi-purpose Regional District headed by one Board assisted by one fully co-ordinated staff which can assume responsibility for all activities of a regional nature which may be brought within their jurisdiction. This concept can be completely negated by the opting in, opting out privilege now enjoyed by member Municipalities. We recommend that the Letters Patent of the Regional District be amended to eliminate "opting out" of any member Municipality or unorganized electoral area of any regional function assumed by the Board.<sup>24</sup>

This recommendation was accepted by the Minister. The *Municipal Act* was amended to provide that letters patent may compel some or all municipalities to participate in and be affected by a function of regional district when:

1. At least 2/3 of the district board directors, having among them at least 2/3 of the votes on the board, have approved the decision, and,
2. At least 2/3 of the member municipalities and unincorporated areas which are to participate have consented. (Municipal consent is to be expressed by councils; that of unincorporated areas, by statement of the elected director.)<sup>25</sup>

However, when the function concerned is public housing, trunk sewers, or sewage disposal facilities, the request need receive the approval of only a majority of directors, having among them at least a majority of votes.<sup>26</sup> Thus, for these specific matters, municipalities and unincorporated areas need not be consulted directly. Nevertheless, the removal of the "opting

<sup>24</sup> GVRD, Political and Administrative Structure Review Committee, "Report No. 1, February 20, 1969," (Mimeo.).

<sup>25</sup> *Municipal Act*, 1970, Section 766.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*



out” provision was not accompanied by the elimination of the powers of the provincial government to specify functions for regional districts in the first place — either through statute (a legislative prerogative which could not be removed in any case) or by letters patent. Thus, there are now three methods by which regional districts may acquire functions — by legislative enactment, by letters patent regardless of whether they have been requested by districts, and by letters patent following request by the district affected. At present, however, these complicated provisions have not, in fact, been crucial in the acquisition of functions by the GVRD; for in every case dissent has been absent or minimal. Nevertheless, the elimination of the “opting out” provision stands as having great potential importance, and must be regarded as the single most significant development which has taken place in the field of regional government in British Columbia since the regional district concept was implemented in the province.

The actual acquisition of a function by a regional district may be seen as consisting of two stages. First, there is the decision to adopt the function, with the subsequent structural adaptation taking the form of creation of a policy committee within the board and formation of a department of administration. Second, there is the substantive aspect of ongoing rule making and implementation. The GVRD has accomplished the first stage in acquiring various functions, but has not yet progressed to the second stage in the case of any of them.

Leaving aside hospital construction, the first function acquired by the GVRD was debt management (i.e. the financing of local works projects) on behalf of municipalities. All municipalities accepted the value of having their own debentures supported by the assessed value of property within the entire region. Our interviews with GVRD Board members indicate strongly that debt financing was a major preoccupation of the members during the formative period of the GVRD and contributed greatly to their favourable views of regional district efficacy. (In fact, the change of name from Regional District of Fraser-Burrard to GVRD was made to facilitate borrowing, since major lenders were unfamiliar with the former term.) Since debt management is purely a service performed by the District acting as agent for individual municipalities, it is unlikely that this function will ever involve ongoing rule making and implementation.

Regional land use planning was the second function acquired by the GVRD. The fact that this function was being removed from an existing single purpose authority, the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board (LMRPB), led to various delays in the actual transfer to the GVRD,

since the GVRD Board took some time to come to an understanding on the transfer, and since the senior staff of the LMRPB were reluctant to allow their organization a quiet death. Eventually, the transfer was effected when the Minister had letters patent issued bestowing the function of regional planning on all regional districts. In the following period, although the details need not be gone into here, the GVRD acquired, essentially at its own initiative, several relatively minor functions: preparation of land use plans for member units; provision of local services, such as water and sewage facilities and street lighting to member units on a contract basis; the establishing of building regulations; and control of outdoor performances and gatherings in unincorporated areas. The last mentioned of these functions was bestowed by letters patent on all districts in the province as a result of a request from the GVRD Board, which was exercised over the ominous portent of a "proposed hippie rally on Bowen Island."<sup>27</sup> In early 1971, the GVRD acquired the major function of provision of public housing in the region. In fact this function was the first whose acquisition was the result of lengthy and fully developed study and discussion within the GVRD Board. Several of the suburban municipalities objected to the acquisition since they viewed public housing as a responsibility of senior governments or as a problem which they themselves did not have. Eventually, letters patent were requested and issued containing the provision that no municipality could be compelled to accept public housing within its boundaries, but that all member units were to share in the administrative costs of the function. In January 1972, GVRD acquired responsibility for the regional park function (acquisition of land for regional parks) when the Regional Park District was amalgamated with the GVRD. Then in May, it received letters patent from the provincial government formally granting responsibility for air pollution control.

By late 1971 the GVRD acquired the functions hitherto performed by the Greater Vancouver Sewerage and Drainage District and the Greater Vancouver Water District — the authorities which were the oldest in the region and which had functioned with a common staff and permanent director (the Commissioner) — a rather lengthy process. The acquisition of these functions had been urged by the Minister and his senior officials since the inception of the GVRD, but had been thwarted locally by those who wished to preserve the position of the Commissioner — an official who had acquired, through formal and informal developments, the actual supremacy in policy making and administration. The whole matter could

<sup>27</sup> GVRD, *Minutes*, June 24, 1970.

provide a fascinating case study of bureaucratic survival.<sup>28</sup> Agreement was reached that the Sewerage and Water Boards would remain legally separate entities, but that they would have the same relationship to the GVRD Board as does the Hospital District Board — that is, the Boards would have common memberships (although this statement must be qualified by the fact that a few GVRD member units are not members of one or the other of the Water and Sewerage Districts, and that a few members of these latter Districts are not members of the GVRD). However, this agreement would most likely not have been reached had the Minister not made clear his displeasure and impatience at the repeated delays. The general stance and attitude of the Minister were exemplified in a letter of his to the GVRD Board in March 1970, (the same letter was sent to the Water and Sewerage Boards).

I see no reason why this legislation [i.e., in draft form submitted by the Boards] cannot be in my hands by the 1st of October 1970. I am quite prepared to act as an arbitrator should there be any legislative or technical grounds upon which agreement cannot be reached. . . . I repeat that it is preferable for the parties concerned to reach such agreement during the course of the next several months. In any event, I propose to recommend to the legislature during the course of the 1971 session . . . inclusion of the functions [of the Water and Sewerage Districts] as functions of the Greater Vancouver Regional District.<sup>29</sup>

A number of further functions were being considered by the GVRD Board in mid 1972. These included: noise pollution control, regional transportation, solid waste disposal, collective labour negotiations for members units, and construction and operation of a remand-detention home for juvenile offenders, and regional building control.

By May 1972 then, the GVRD possessed the functions of capital financing, regional planning, community planning, contractual services, building regulation, public housing, air pollution control, regional parks and (ignoring the niceties concerning legally separate Districts) water supply, sewage disposal and hospital construction. A number of factors may be identified which impose uncertainties and difficulties in the way of acquisition of functions. It is quite evident that the GVRD is unlikely to acquire any major function in the absence of a clear policy position on the part of the provincial government, and perhaps also on the part of the

<sup>28</sup> Cf. especially GVRD "Interim Report of Technical Committee . . . to Consider the Integration of [the Water and Sewerage Districts with the GVRD]," (Mimeo., July 17, 1970).

<sup>29</sup> GVRD, *Minutes*, April 15, 1970.

federal government when federal financial participation is involved. Acquisition of the control of air pollution function has been hampered by lack of consensus among the provincial departments concerned and acquisition of the regional transportation function will be affected by federal policies. Second, there is the obvious factor related to lack of consensus among local municipalities. Third, there is the potential factor related to the lack of any meaningful leadership structure within the GVRD Board. Finally, the most serious difficulty faced has been in acquiring functions performed by existing single purpose authorities. In this case, the presence of an entrenched bureaucratic leader would appear to be the main variable — this variable was present both in the case of the regional planning function and in the case of water and sewage functions. In both cases the local board members proved incapable of resolving the issue and the intervention of the Minister was required. Abolition of the Parks District would be unlikely to raise serious difficulties, since the authority concerned has no established bureaucracy — nor, for the same reason, would abolition of the Health Districts be likely to cause difficulties. Since there are no other single purpose authorities remaining in the region, and thus no remaining *regional* rivals to the GVRD, future acquisition of functions and, of course, performance of functions, will be affected primarily by the decision making patterns which develop within the GVRD (with the role played by the regional staff being an important variable) and by the stance which the GVRD Board develops towards the Minister and his senior staff.

### *GVRD Sub-structure*

As we have mentioned several times, the GVRD has not yet entered the stage in which it is engaged in the day-to-day rule-making and rule-application. The GVRD has however taken substantial steps in the formation of what might be termed a sub-structure which will affect the way the everyday business of metropolitan government is eventually carried out in greater Vancouver. Few GVRD directors, however, have what might be termed a “developmental approach” to the GVRD — in most cases the existing municipalities are seen as the prime entities and constituencies, with the District seen merely as a co-ordinator and common instrument of the separate local government. Subtly and increasingly, staff of the District are acquiring decision-making roles — for reasons basically the same as those which everywhere bring co-ordinated staffs of full-time technical experts into positions of dominance over unco-ordinated boards of part-time elected officials. The staff of the

GVRD numbered some 37 persons in April 1972. The Planning Staff numbered some 23 persons, about half of whom were professional planners. Some of this staff had been transferred from the defunct Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board, although it is significant that the Director of Planning and several other senior staff had been brought in from outside Vancouver. The Planning Staff is thus marked by a continuity of attitudes and values remaining from the Planning Board but also by the fact that its chief officials have no pre-existing connections with, or loyalties to, the local municipalities. From the viewpoint of establishing basic decision-making patterns for the future it may prove decisive that the planning staff was the first policy-related group attached to the GVRD.

Within British Columbia local government there is a general tendency for the publicly-visible elective structures to be duplicated within the bureaucracy. This tendency is reflected within the GVRD structure in the form of the Technical Planning Committee (TPC). The *Municipal Act* provides that all districts have such a body; it is to be composed of the regional director of planning, an employee from and appointed by each municipality, an official of the Department of Municipal Affairs, one representative from each of seven other provincial departments or agencies (Lands, Water Resources, Forests, Agriculture, Highways, Fish and Wildlife and Parks) as well as from any others named by the Minister, an employee of each school district in the region, and "one employee of such departments and Crown agencies of the Government of Canada as may be designated by the Minister (of Municipal Affairs)."<sup>30</sup> The *Act* assigns the TPC two duties: to advise the Board on planning matters and to "act as a liaison between the administration of the Regional Board and the respective departments of Government and the member municipalities."<sup>31</sup> The TPC clearly has a much wider representational base than does the Board itself and the membership of the TPC differs from that of the Board in that the TPC contains technical experts intimately familiar with policy-making and implementation in other governments: thus it has the potential of becoming a major clearing-house for regional policy and administrative decisions. The TPC of the GVRD was not created until 1970 and is not yet fully developed. Local municipalities have in most cases appointed their senior planner to the TPC. The GVRD established the Regional Administrative Advisory Committee in early 1968. Its main task is to second municipal staff to the "technical" committees. It

<sup>30</sup> *Municipal Act*, 1970, Section 798 B.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

is composed of the chief administrative officers of the municipalities and the staff directors of existing single purpose regional authorities. Although this Committee, more than the TPC, provides the bureaucratic duplicate of the GVRD Board, it does not appear to have attained a major policy role. Both standing and special committees exist within the GVRD Board itself. The major standing committee is that on Planning. The major special committee has been the Political and Administrative Structure Review Committee. There is a firm pattern of duplicate committees of bureaucrats ("technical" committees) to advise both standing and special committees. As one might expect, given the role of the bureaucracies in B.C. local government, appointments to the bureaucratic committees are a greater potential source of conflict and hostility than are appointments of Board members to committees. (Indeed, the first recorded split role in the GVRD Board took place on a motion to appoint the senior administrator of Vancouver City to a technical committee.) The major function of the Regional Administrative Advisory Committee appears to have become that of nominating the members of the technical committees — thus publicly visible conflict is now eliminated in this matter.

Until June 1971 the only executive structure within the GVRD was the Executive Committee of the Board. It contains nine members selected by the Board; it is presided over by the Board Chairman. Representation on the Committee has rested on the informal notion that Vancouver City will have two members and that no other municipality will have more than one member on the Committee. Neither the Chairman nor the Executive Committee has any special powers; although, since the Committee meets more frequently than the Board it is a forum for preliminary and more thorough discussion. In June 1971 the Executive Committee was ostensibly supplemented by a three member Management Committee consisting of the Board Chairman, the Commissioner of the Water and Sewerage Districts, and the Secretary-Treasurer of the GVRD. At the same time the Commissioner was appointed Director of Operations (with responsibilities eventually to include supervision of water supply, sewage disposal, solid waste disposal and air pollution control) while the Secretary-Treasurer was made Director of Finance and Administration (with responsibilities eventually to include supervision of hospital construction, regional planning, regional park administration, public housing, and financial and administrative aspects of GVRD operation).<sup>32</sup> Thus the GVRD would appear to have taken a major step towards creation of an integrated administrative structure on the model of the city commissioner

<sup>32</sup> GVRD, *Minutes*, June 23, 1971.

type of municipal executive best known in Canadian experience in Edmonton and Calgary. Vancouver City at one time had an identical structure composed of the Mayor and two administrators. However, in creating the Management Committee the GVRD Board was consciously following neither the Alberta nor the Vancouver precedent. The decision was a compromise response to continuing disagreement at the staff level over the integration of the Water and Sewerage Districts into the GVRD. The position and role of the Management Committee is thus ambiguous (especially since the Water and Sewerage Districts remain legally separate entities) and for the present it appears more a manifestation of factional retrenchment than of staff integration.

We have previously referred to some of the ideological and strategical reasons for the virtually complete lack of public involvement in the creation and operation of the GVRD. Since municipal representatives are selected by councils, the municipal voter as such is not made aware of the GVRD. No municipal councillor, or candidate for council, as far as we are aware, has even advocated direct election of board members from municipalities. In October 1969, the GVRD Board, after having previously defeated it, passed a motion that the name GVRD Board be changed to "GVRD Council" in order to make the Board more recognizable as a government. The Minister of Municipal Affairs ignored the suggestion. The GVRD has no administrative headquarters of its own — its main offices are in the building housing the Water and Sewerage Districts' offices, and no external indication has been erected to mark the inward presence of the GVRD. Reporters do attend board meetings, but media coverage is not extensive and for the most part the media depend upon the press releases issued by the public relations firm hired by the District for this limited task. In 1969, the firm prepared a small pamphlet describing the GVRD which was sent by municipal councils to each local taxpayer. This pamphlet remains the only direct mass communication which has taken place between the Regional Board and the regional citizen. More recently, however, the Planning Department has been widely circulating a newsletter on a trial basis.

On only two occasions, both involving the same representative of the major semi-private charitable organization in the region, have delegations appeared at Board meetings — on no other occasion to our knowledge have individuals or groups even requested an opportunity to appear before the Board, even though subjects discussed by the Board have been relevant to the concerns of interest groups vocal at the municipal and provincial level. Thus one cannot, in the case of the development of the

GVRD, present lists of groups favourable and groups opposed to regional government; even though this has often been done in studies of regional government elsewhere, it would make no sense in the case of Vancouver since group awareness is so low and since regional development did not originate in local advocacy or grow out of local problems.<sup>33</sup> Two groups may be mentioned, however, which may come to play some role in facilitating public involvement in, or at least public awareness of, regional decision-making. One of these is the Inter-Institutional Policy Simulation (IIPS) project — a group composed of academics from the University of British Columbia, of Vancouver City administrators, and of GVRD planning staff, all of whom are attempting to construct a computer model which will allow simulation of policy outcomes. In structure, this group resembles a GVRD technical committee, yet it is unique in having been initiated by the academics. The second group is the Vancouver chapter of the International Association for Metropolitan Research and Development (INTERMET). The Vancouver chapter contains business, professional, and academic persons interested in regional decision-making, as well as municipal administrators and two members of the GVRD Board — the executive director of the chapter is one of the senior GVRD planning staff. INTERMET, in its Vancouver manifestation, at least, differs from the IIPS project in attempting to bring representatives of major local interest groups together and in having been initiated by the GVRD staff member.

In terms of Board decision-making, as narrowly defined to mean making actual formal decisions, very little further may be said. There were fewer than half a dozen recorded votes in the first four years of the GVRD; only two of these votes may be considered significant. Normally decisions were discussed sufficiently in the executive committee or in other committees, or else were so non-controversial, that only an unrecorded voice vote was taken. The weighted voting provisions were never applied in these voice votes — for with dissent absent or confined to a few directors, the result would have been the same whether a director had cast one vote or five. However, any individual director could call for a recorded vote — in which case the formal weighted voting provisions applied. The significant cases of recorded votes — on the question of appointing the senior Vancouver city administrator to a committee which was consider-

<sup>33</sup> Cf., Frank Smallwood, "The politics of Regional Government," paper presented to the "Metropolis and Region" Lecture Series, Bureau of Municipal Research, Toronto, December 1, 1966. Reprinted in L. D. Feldman and M. D. Goldrick (eds.), *Politics and Government of Urban Canada* (Toronto: Methuen, 1969), 240-250.



ing the structure of the GVRD and on the question of adopting the public housing function — both demonstrated a split between the more heavily populated, more urban municipalities and the smaller, more suburban and rural members of the GVRD. In both cases the latter group lost — in the case of housing nine of the 22 directors (41%) were opposed, but they controlled only 15 of the 56 votes (27%) on the Board.

All in all, however, conflict situations have been too few in number and too small in significance to support any prediction that the small-large, urban-suburban split will become more important as the GVRD develops. Presumably the factors of perceived need by member units together with financial aspects related to the acquisition and administration of functions will determine whether there develops any important division between differing types of member units. There is some small possibility that the very absence of conflict during the first four years of the GVRD's existence has led to sufficient integration that a normative bulwark has developed which will mitigate against any permanent cleavages within the Board. Attainment of such a possibility has been a major objective of the provincial officials as has attainment of the possibility that local leaders and local publics will come to give substantial normative support to the GVRD. Structural innovation has been the means used by the provincial officials — they have acted on the premise that behavioural and attitudinal support would develop in and around the institutional container. There is as yet no evidence indicating whether such a development will take place in any significant way before the GVRD proceeds to attempt authoritative rule-making.

### *Conclusions*

It is significant as well as customary in analyses of the kind we are pursuing to distinguish between conditioning factors within the region and conditioning factors external to the region. In British Columbia's progress towards regional government in general and in Vancouver's progress towards metropolitan government in particular, it is clear that the primary creative policy making has occurred not at the regional or local level but rather at the provincial level. This fact is in turn related to the nature of political beliefs about local government in British Columbia and to the rejection by provincial officials of the notion that established municipalities are meaningful modern communities. The provincial strategy in implementing regional government has been unaffected by at least two major considerations which have influenced the attitudes towards regionalization on the part of senior governments elsewhere. First, the possi-

bility that established regional governments might become strong enough to weaken or rival the power of the senior government has not been taken seriously by the provincial officials. As long as local political office is not a regularized step to a career in provincial politics, and as long as local electoral politics is virtually completely divorced from provincial electoral politics, it would seem to be impossible for local politicians to build a base from which to rival the Minister. Besides only the Minister has the formal authority and a province-wide scope for legitimate activity. Second, some governments, perhaps especially the government of Ontario, have at times expressed concern that regional governments would serve as a barrier between the senior government and both the people and existing municipalities.<sup>34</sup> Insofar as regional governments in B.C. may meet demands and provide services that the province would otherwise have to meet or provide, the Minister would be unlikely to complain. Ties such as there are between province and existing urban municipalities may be expected to weaken to the extent that municipal identity becomes subsumed in the developing GVRD. Since the Minister's whole programme of regional government appears to rest on the view that existing urban municipalities are not a meaningful base of community, the Minister would likely welcome the weakening of provincial-municipal ties and the strengthening of regional-provincial ties.

Finally, in the provincial strategy for regional government there have been two features which appear unique. The provisions by which any member of a regional government could "opt out" of participation in a function were significant in allaying fears of local leaders — once these provisions had served their purpose they were abolished. The other feature is the degree to which legitimizing myths appear to have been consciously created by the provincial strategists. The belief that regional districts are not and will not become governments is now firmly entrenched in the local political culture of British Columbia. In British Columbia it is believed that a government must be directly elected and have the power to tax citizens directly; anything else does not have the potential of becoming a government and therefore cannot threaten existing municipalities. It is probably true, however, that legitimizing myths are an essential ingredient in the creation of all governments and that the success of such myths is dependent upon the statesmanship of those creating them and upon the parochialism of those in whose interest the myths are created.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 246-247.