

boundary of the Bulkley-Nechako regional district. In the opinion of the Smithers Chamber of Commerce the new riding, Prince George-Bulkley Valley, would exclude the major community in the Bulkley Valley, which is Smithers.

It is generally acknowledged that Smithers is the service centre for the Bulkley valley. In fact it includes the towns and villages of Hazelton, Telkwa, Houston, Topley, Granisle and, to a certain extent, Burns Lake as being within its trading area. Major government agencies, federal and provincial, are established in Smithers and are responsible for serving the people of the communities mentioned, as well as the rural areas in between. Industries and features are all common to areas surrounding and east of Smithers, and dissimilar to areas to the west, in the opinion of the Smithers Chamber of Commerce. They state the following, and I quote:

Weather—being of the dryer, more extreme type common to interior areas which have a direct bearing on agriculture and forestry to name only two.

Topography—Smithers being the western edge of the interior or Nechako plateau consisting of more of a gradual sloping geography as compared to the mountainous areas to the west.

Agriculture—beef production mainly cow/calf operations stretch from northwest of Smithers all the way through to the Prince George area. Dairy farms are concentrated in the Bulkley valley from south of Moricetown to north of Houston. Root crops grown are similar to those grown eastward.

Industry—until recently, we have been the centre of exploration activities in the northwest central interior and this could become active again, as well we service the mining community of Granisle. Most mills are of the smaller sawmill type, with no pulp mills, using contract loggers and truckers to bring in the logs and the CNR to ship the lumber and chips. The CNR in Smithers is the divisional point for traffic east to Endako.

The forest industry which is common to Terrace, Kitimat, and Prince Rupert, is different in that the wood cut in the interior is generally smaller in diameter than that cut in the coastal areas, therefore, much different methods are used.

I have had further representations which contradict the views I have given. They are from a group of residents some 100 miles to the east of Smithers in the community of Houston. It is the desire of the Houston petitioners that their town and its environs not be included in Prince George-Bulkley Valley constituency, but that the eastern boundary of Skeena be extended to the school district 54 eastern boundary, thus placing Houston as the eastern terminus of the new western constituency of Skeena. The community of interest in wood products, transportation, communications and history is cited by Houston as reason for consideration of their request.

The constituency of Skeena is huge, with difficult transportation access and a population that is numerically vulnerable to influences from the south. As their member of parliament I have had the singular experience of seeing and traversing the whole of the area I represent.

The proposed changes placed upon the record tonight are sincerely put forward for consideration of the commission. I ask that the decade to come be fully considered in the proposed changes. The people of Canada's mid north will undoubtedly grow more numerous as years go on and ought not to be divided on the basis of the new resources they command but rather on human terms. In this, may I commend the Electoral Boundaries Commission in the exacting work they have done. As a representative of northern people I respect the work they have completed,

### *Electoral Boundaries*

If I elect to drive 80 miles through the mountain pass to reach Creston, I can travel north from Creston to service small communities such as Sikar, Gray Creek, Boswell, etc. and look forward to the contest in 1978 in less arduous geography as a result of their deliberations.

● (0140)

**Mr. Bob Brisco (Kootenay West):** Mr. Speaker, I have not spoken in the House for some time at 1.40 a.m. Initially I shall make two observations about the commission responsible for redistribution.

Some feel that because a member presents briefs to a commission and makes representation, he is politically motivated. Some think that members of parliament or prospective candidates for election merely appear before commissions to grind their axes, in the hope that the riding will be carved up to the political advantage of the applicant.

When I appeared before the commission in 1972 or 1973, with a proposal for creating a new federal riding to be known either as Trail-Penticton or Penticton-Trail, the Secretary said that 99 per cent of all representations were of a political nature. On reflection I wonder if that is so bad. After all, who is more familiar with a riding than the member of parliament representing it? He knows only too well how easy or how difficult it is to move around and service the riding, particularly if it is a rural riding. Perhaps he must drive between 100 and 150 miles to get from one end to the other. For example, if I want to visit the small community of Edgewood on the western boundary of the riding, I must travel 163 miles and make one ferry crossing.

When the commission sat in Kootenay West it made two changes, both of which concern me for different reasons. First and most dramatically, it removed Creston from Kootenay West and put it in Kootenay East. In the last 30 years we have witnessed three proposals for moving the small town of Creston out of the constituency. This will be the fourth attempt to change its political identity. This proposal is not taken lightly, as was demonstrated at the commission hearing in Nelson. It is not taken lightly by the city council, which voted unanimously to remain in Kootenay West; it is not taken lightly by the chamber of commerce, which voted unanimously to remain in Kootenay West; and it is not taken lightly by those who replied to my questionnaire. The people feel that removing the town will lead to loss of political identity and of social and economic links.

In my riding, mountains and lakes constitute natural geographic boundaries which I feel the commission failed to recognize. It failed to recognize that the eastern boundary of Kootenay West has traditionally been the western line of the Purcell Mountains or, if you will, the eastern margin of the major portion of Kootenay Lake.

Let me explain how you can go to Creston. You can choose two routes. If you go one way, you drive over the Salmo-Creston Skyway, through one of the highest mountain passes in British Columbia and scene of landslides. This year avalanches took several lives. I do not say I was in jeopardy on that road. Nonetheless it is a hazardous road in winter.