

Redistribution

there would have been something that the commission could accept.

Surely the admission of the chairman of the commission would indicate that what took place was cut and dried. That is much like the laws of the Medes and the Persians. That is not the way to build co-operation and to assure that the franchise—the highest right a Canadian citizen has—shall not be subject to considerations other than for the welfare of the state and the right of the individual.

Mr. J. E. Pascoe (Moose Jaw-Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, the right hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker) and the hon. member for Qu'Appelle (Mr. Hamilton) have presented very clearly and forcefully the objections of Saskatchewan members of parliament to the proposals of the Electoral Boundaries Commission for the redistribution of the federal constituencies in our province. I do not consider it necessary to add anything of a general nature to those very strong objections to the redistribution map that appears in the report of the commission. There are a few points that I should emphasize in regard to local problems.

● (4:30 p.m.)

I want to state, as other members have, that my remarks are not based on self-interest. I consider that I am speaking for a community of interest and for local contacts. I have before me the map of the constituency proposed by the Electoral Boundaries Commission. It includes the city of Moose Jaw which I represent. About the only portion that remains of the constituency I represent, Moose Jaw-Lake Centre, is the city of Moose Jaw. Nearly all Lake Centre, which I have represented for more than eight years, has been chopped off. I would point out, however, that another portion of old Lake Centre has been included. This is a very fine area and any member would be very proud to represent it. I am not presenting this individual objection on any other ground than trading areas, accessibility and coverage by news media. I consider these three criteria to be very important in determining constituency boundaries. Accessibility to all sections of a constituency is a main essential in redistribution. This fact has been emphasized by previous speakers.

Accessibility involves main highways, natural boundaries such as rivers, and the avoidance of barriers such as large lakes and river valleys which make automobile travel difficult. An inspection of the map of the constituency proposed by the commission will

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

emphasize the points to which I refer. I am dealing now with the proposed new constituency of Moose Jaw. I deal first with the trading areas. The line drawn by the commission extends north from Moose Jaw a distance of about 100 miles to within 12 miles of Saskatoon, which certainly is in the Saskatoon trading area. Then it extends 80 miles or more to within 18 miles of Swift Current, which is completely within the Swift Current trading area. These are very fine trading areas but they are distinct trading areas, being separated by distance and having very little to do with each other in regard to commercial trading.

I would emphasize particularly the importance of accessibility to all sections of a constituency. This matter has been referred to by other hon. members. In the map drawn up by the commission the South Saskatchewan River cuts through almost the middle of the proposed constituency of Moose Jaw and includes Outlook, where the dam on the South Saskatchewan River will be situated. As other speakers have mentioned, the building of this dam will create a lake over 200 feet deep, seven or eight miles across and 135 or 140 miles long clean through the middle of the proposed constituency. Whoever represents the constituency of Moose Jaw will have almost as large an area on the northwest side of this huge lake as there is on the southeast side, and there will be very few ways of getting across the lake except by means of a few bridges.

In my opinion the commission should have considered this matter very carefully. The right hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker) referred to statements of the commissioner. The commissioner said that he listened to arguments but saw no reason for changing these boundaries. I would point out that in my objection—and I appeared before the commissioner and presented my case as clearly as I could—I told him about this lake. He and the other two commissioners nodded their heads, appeared to agree with what I said, and then I was surprised to read the report that they decided they would leave the boundaries exactly where they were. Perhaps I should not say this, but maybe they did not want to go to the trouble, as they told me personally, because moving the boundaries of one constituency would involve changing all the rest and arriving at new figures.

I can vouch for the fact that the figures on the map presented by the hon. member for