

Redistribution

present their case as to why they felt something should not be done to them, and if the hon. member could show that he was being hurt worse than somebody else I think the committee would show some leniency in his case.

Mr. Brooks: Mr. Chairman, at this late hour I do not intend to take much of the time of the committee. In fact I could not if I wanted to. I intend to discuss my own province to some extent, but I will not do so now. I was a member of the maritime provinces sub-committee, and I should like to refer to a matter concerning the province of Nova Scotia. When we first met we did not seem to have very many problems, and we had a very congenial meeting. There were two problems with which we had to deal. First there was the question of the constituency of Queens about which the hon. member for Queens has told you. The second question had to do with what would be done in Nova Scotia where the number of seats was to be reduced by one.

It was decided unanimously at our meeting that the constituency of Queens-Shelburne should be the one to be dropped. We did not discuss the matter at any great length, but it seemed obvious to everyone that that was the only logical conclusion to which we could come. I know it was mentioned that it was regrettable that it had to be the constituency of the hon. member for Queens-Shelburne, and may I personally say how much I regret his ill health. I wish to join with the Minister of Resources and Development and others in the hope that he may soon recover.

The minister and others have referred to Queens-Shelburne as being a Liberal constituency. As I recall what took place in the committee it was brought out that the constituency was usually a fifty-fifty proposition and that in the last federal election Dr. Smith won the seat by something like 200 votes at a time when there was a definite swing against the opposition party. That will indicate to hon. members that the Liberals on the committee did not consider that the abolishing of the seat was such a great loss politically.

It was also definitely decided—and this is my recollection of what took place as outlined by the hon. member for Melfort—that the constituency of Annapolis-Kings was to remain as it was. I have a definite recollection of that, and was very much surprised when I heard that there had been a change. It was understood that the affected areas in Nova Scotia would be the constituency of Lunenburg, the constituency of Queens-Shelburne and the constituency of Digby-Yarmouth. As a matter of fact after the

committee meeting the hon. member for Melfort and I were with the hon. member for Annapolis-Kings and we congratulated him. The hon. member for Melfort referred to the fact that his constituency was to be left as it was. What understanding was reached later I am not in a position to judge, or why a misunderstanding arose; but the fact is that after the meeting it was agreed that since it was entirely a Liberal matter we would leave it to the Liberal members to decide what they should do with Queens-Shelburne. If the constituency of Annapolis-Kings had been involved do you think we would have left it to the Liberal members as we did? I am sure the Liberal members will agree that was the understanding, that we would leave it with them. I remember that the hon. member for Antigonish-Guysborough said: We will have to do a bit of juggling. He did not mean it in the sense meant when you speak of juggling things around to suit yourself, but he realized at the time that it was up to them to look after this proposition.

So as I say I was amazed later on when I was told that another committee meeting had been held—I was away at the time—and it had been decided to put half the county of Digby in with Annapolis-Kings and the other half with the constituency of Yarmouth. I am sure hon. members can see just why we considered that the constituency of Annapolis-Kings would not be touched. These figures were brought in to the committee. The constituency of Lunenburg had 33,256; Yarmouth-Digby had 42,783; and Annapolis-Kings had 54,930. It surely would occur to any logical group of men that a constituency of 54,930 would not be added to when you had two adjoining constituencies, one of 33,256 and the other of 42,783.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Brooks: We never for a moment thought that Annapolis-Kings would be touched. As I say, we understood that it would be left alone. When I heard of the proposed change—that is, that Lunenburg and Queens would be joined to make 45,800, Yarmouth, Clare and Shelburne to make 45,595, and Annapolis-Kings and Digby to make 66,510—a constituency with almost 22,000 more than the others—it immediately appealed to me as being most unfair. We asked for another committee meeting, which was called; and at that committee meeting, Mr. Chairman, I moved an amendment. The amendment was to the effect that Lunenburg and Queens be joined, giving a population of 45,800; that Yarmouth, Digby and Shelburne be joined to give a population of 57,175; and that Annapolis-Kings be joined giving a population of