

I know about it because somebody had been asked by the party to do the work on the committee. I had asked to sit on the committee but someone else from Montreal was appointed. He was my deskmate at the time. He had played golf with the Prince of Wales. One day he had to make a speech on the Ottawa agreements. He was a very hard worker. He read four pages of a speech made by Mr. Bennett, who was Prime Minister, and then he read four pages of a speech by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King), who was then leader of the opposition; he read those eight pages and concluded by saying, "I agree with my chief, the leader of the opposition, against the leader of the government," and he sat down. That was his speech. He met the man who was sitting on the committee for the province of Quebec, a solicitor who worked very hard, but he did not work very hard.

One day I was coming up to the house and the late Mr. Lapointe met me. He said, "Jean-François, you will have to do that work." I said, "I was not put on the committee; I know it is going to be a hard job, but I have not been appointed." Finally I gathered all the old statutes from 1853 to 1923, which was the time of the previous redistribution, and I prepared a history of the redistributions during those eighty years. I prepared the story of the effect of each redistribution upon each constituency in the province of Quebec. I gave it to the late Mr. Lapointe and to Mr. Cardin, and it was used in discussing the matter with the two Tory bigwigs who were representing their party. I supplied the stuff that they had to work with. Many hon. members expressed their opinions about the whole matter and described the gerrymander as a scandal, which it was.

We should have changed it after the last census. However, we were at war, and what humiliated me profoundly was the fact that this parliament approved a motion to kneel down humbly before the British government to ask them to make an exception and allow us to wait until the war was over, to permit the dominion government not to proceed at once with the redistribution which should have been done by virtue of our constitution. Some one has said that business is pressing, that there are many things to do, but in my humble view the first thing we should do is to comply with the constitution of this country.

The legislation which was passed two years ago exists no longer. That legislation passed by the imperial parliament was good only for the time of the war. As soon as the war was over with our three enemies, Germany, Italy and Japan, that legislation, which changed the

constitution for a limited period, no longer had effect. We are now in this absurd situation: the time to revise the boundaries of the constituencies, otherwise to pass a Redistribution Act in accordance with the census, has passed; the limited period of delay granted to Canada by the imperial parliament has passed, and nothing has been done. That is an anomaly. It is something that cannot be explained. We are in a false situation.

Whether elections take place in the near future or at a later date, the fact remains that at a time when economy is being preached everywhere we have in this House of Commons twenty members who would not be sitting here if the constitution were being applied. Therefore we are expending twenty times \$6,000, or \$120,000, plus travelling expenses, which should not be expended at this time.

Mr. BRACKEN: Where do you get the \$6,000?

Mr. POULIOT: I am an optimist. Even putting it at \$4,000, we have a total of \$80,000. That is a lot of money to pay to gentlemen who are not entitled to sit among us. Moreover, we should take advantage of the rules of the house to point out these strangers, not in the gallery, but on the floor of the house. Who are these strangers? Here again it is the old story. We have to please first one and then another province, instead of doing what is right. That is the thing I have always complained of. Here we are to please or not to displease some one province or other. When we have something to do which is the right thing to do, we should do it. It is of no importance at all for us to consider: Let us please, let us be pleasant, let us appease somebody or other. That was Chamberlain's motto—let us appease. When you appease one province, then you have to appease another. It is no good to appease Manitoba, let us say, at the expense of Quebec, and afterwards to appease Quebec at the expense of another province. Let us be more serious. Let us abide by the constitution. Let us go on our knees to London to the least extent possible by way of asking them to change our constitution on such a pretext as was used the last time. The war was made the pretext, but the real reason was not to indispose Saskatchewan. And what was the gratitude of Saskatchewan to the government for that? None at all; it was not appreciated. Probably it would have been much more in the practical interests of the government to act in accordance with the constitution and to have that redistribution submitted to the house. The government would have lost no seats by that, and per-

[Mr. Pouliot.]