

Electoral Boundaries

in 1,000 years that, yes, in Nova Scotia there is the Annapolis Valley. It has not been broken up, not torn asunder.

God bless the hon. member for South Western Nova (Miss Campbell) who, under Mr. Justice MacDonald's proposal, will extend her sphere of influence and good service up into the area about which I am concerned. I am sure she will represent those people ably. Mr. Commissioner MacDonald and his fellow commissioners are not imposing on her an unacceptable task. It is not a task with which she cannot deal.

Miss Campbell: Thank you.

Mr. Forrestall: The hon. member may speak, if she wants to. But the commission is asking her to represent people whose culture, history, and way of life are different.

The hon. member for Halifax-East Hants suggested a method for correcting numerical disparities in order to ease the strain, as it were, on our constituencies. Using the figures of six or seven years ago to establish an average today is utterly ridiculous, as our constituencies have now grown to the size of the original constituency before it was divided. I think that my constituency population is back to over the 100,000 figure, and I am sure that my colleague's constituency population is also well over the 100,000 mark. Perhaps I am wrong. Perhaps it contains slightly over 80,000 people. I do not think he objects to representing a fair number of Canadians. Indeed, I would welcome representing half a million Nova Scotians. Numbers are not important. More important are community of interest and a common heritage of history and culture.

I hope that Mr. Justice MacDonald and the commissioners will take note of our intervention. I say this to Commissioner MacDonald, who I hope will read these pages of *Hansard*: these questions are all important. I trust he will listen to me, to the hon. member for Annapolis Valley, and the hon. member for Halifax-East Hants. We say that numbers alone are not important. What is important is that people have their day in court, that people with common cultural and historical roots remain together in a constituency.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The House having considered these objections, it is my duty pursuant to section 20 of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act to refer the Report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission for the province of Nova Scotia, together with copies of the objections, and also a copy of the *Debates of the House of Commons*, back to the commission, for reconsideration thereof.

OBJECTIONS TO COMMISSION REPORT RESPECTING ALBERTA

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, as reported at page 12477 of *Hansard*, I made some general remarks about the principles which should guide redistribution commissions, and particularly the considerations which ought to apply to the most important people involved in all this, the people who are to be represented. All too often, as I said yesterday, they are so many ciphers, so many head of cattle enclosed within the fence, within the confines of the corral. I suggest that is totally wrong. Those who insist on playing the numbers

game, who insist on one man, one vote, are also wrong. A good rule of thumb is this: there should be six urban to four rural votes, within the tolerances as laid down by the act.

I addressed the redistribution commission in the Edmonton public hearing and want to put on record most of what I said on that occasion because, in my humble estimation, it bears repeating and should be part of the record.

Bearing in mind that the present redistribution is to have effect for the next decade at least, and in actual fact will have an undoubted influence on the future shape of the Edmonton area constituencies, it is imperative that notwithstanding the population figures of the 1971 census, most active consideration be given to the trends which affected those figures—sterile in themselves—and what future development of the Edmonton area is to be.

June 1, 1971, population figures are being applied, quite erroneously by the commission, to 1975 corporate boundaries. I think this is wrong. They are not the best base on which to establish constituency boundaries. The suggested boundaries, as were those effected in the changes made in 1966-67, are based on sterile figures and are not in conformity with actual or readily foreseeable developments over the next decade.

I know that potential development was discussed and eliminated as a factor by this House, I think in a moment of abject aberration. Still I think that the position taken by the commission with regard to the city boundaries of Edmonton and Calgary as confines for the city constituencies is totally wrong. One can already see that those two boundaries, will be changed. As a matter of fact, discussions are going on now involving the adjoining municipalities, the city of Edmonton, and the provincial government, with regard to changing those boundaries. Therefore if by reason of this exercise the constituency boundaries are limited to the city boundaries and the changes being discussed are made, all this work will go down the drain. I shall make some suggestions which would take care of that situation. In any case there should not be a repetition of the fundamental errors in judgment and assessment by the Electoral Boundaries Commission in 1966-67 as far as the Edmonton metropolitan area is concerned.

● (0030)

While the legislation governing electoral boundary realignment does place an emphasis on population as the basis for constituency composition, it must be clear that the 25 per cent tolerance either way from the average population quotient was intended to be fully meaningful, as were the references in the legislation to other factors to be taken into account, for example, geographical division, community of interest, historical tradition and, last but not least, consideration of the citizenry as persons vitally interested in and identified with, and by, their political representative and not merely as so many ciphers to be moved about by an authority merely on the grounds of "population neutral distribution", which in itself has many variables.

Surely the public interest demands more than such a statistical neutrality, a detached neutrality all too evident in the proposals for electoral boundary redistribution as they were contained in the initial or preliminary report of the commission as it dealt with the city of Edmonton and