

*Redistribution*

that the commissioners be allowed to use a tolerance of 25 per cent.

● (3:30 p.m.)

The members here recognized, as a result of their experience, that you have to have the number of people in a seat to fit the needs of the area. As the hon. member for Kamloops (Mr. Fulton) said earlier, the principle was to allow the people in these constituencies to have access to their member of parliament. If you have a thinly scattered population, this becomes increasingly difficult. This is the second criticism which we, in Saskatchewan, have made of the Saskatchewan report. It is a criticism which is common to the other provinces. The drawing of these boundaries was purely a narrow, mathematical exercise.

I should like to quote a few figures to prove how mathematically accurate the commission was in Saskatchewan. There are four city ridings, and they are shown as follows: Regina East, 82,571; Regina-Lake Centre, 83,574; Saskatoon-Biggar, 82,472; Saskatoon-Humboldt, 83,536. The population in the four rural-urban seats varies, plus or minus, about 1,000. You cannot make it any more accurate than the commission has made it. It would seem that, so far as the commission is concerned, justice was purely a matter of arithmetic.

When you look at the purely rural ridings, which are set out in schedule C, you find these examples: Assiniboia, 66,326; Battleford-Kindersley, 69,170; Swift Current-Maple Creek, 66,514. You will find a small difference separating these rural ridings. I do not believe the academic exercise of drawing constituency boundaries in order to achieve the same numbers in each constituency is what parliament wanted these independent commissions to do.

We have done something radical in this house. We have removed our traditional power to redistribute the seats, and turned that power over to an independent commission, with clearly defined criteria as to how the commissions should establish these constituency boundaries. The commissions have largely ignored these criteria which parliament, in its wisdom, laid down in the act, and relied upon mathematics. This is the intellectual exercise of a bureaucrat and does not represent the independent judgment of a commission.

In my remarks to you, Mr. Speaker, which are being recorded in *Hansard*, I want to say to the commissioners of my province that we

[Mr. Hamilton.]

would like a serious, detailed re-analysis of the report they have submitted in order to get away from this narrow concept of mathematics, and return to the concept of the needs of the people.

I am not going to say too much about the historic associations in the province of Saskatchewan. I have travelled in all the provinces and I know that in the eastern part of Canada generally there is a tremendously deep attachment to the counties. This is part of their history and their culture, and their loyalties are to these counties. We have a little bit of this in Saskatchewan, even though our province is new. We have the relationship between Regina and Moosomin; between Prince Albert and the routes northward. There is the historic relationship of Prince Albert and Carlton; Moose Jaw and Assiniboia. These historic relationships may not be as deep as they are in eastern Canada, but they are all the history we have.

The fourth objection relates to geography. In Saskatchewan, we have about 5 per cent of the population of Canada, yet we have approximately 40 per cent of the roads in Canada. This indicates that the area is thinly settled. Yet here we are trying to provide a parliamentary system of government under which not only the members can serve their people but the people have a feeling of easy access to their member. No matter how good a broad jumper one might be, no matter how good a swimmer one might be, there is nobody in Saskatchewan strong enough to jump the Saskatchewan river. In about two years time, when the dam is completed, we will have a lake 200 feet deep, several miles wide and 138 miles long, dividing the province. The report prepared by the commissioners ignores this fact, that we are not supermen, and constituency boundaries have been drawn straddling these rivers.

I do not know what was in the minds of the commissioners who were raised in Saskatchewan when they drew these maps. Certainly they must have forgotten the long hours of driving which are required to get around a barrier 138 miles long. This not only prevents a member from serving his constituency, but the constituents are denied access to one another. When you look at the constituency of Swift Current-Maple Creek, you find that the boundaries cross the Saskatchewan river to the north, while the boundaries of the Moose Jaw constituency run north nearly to the city of Saskatoon. The