

instance, the hon. member for Bonaventure who lives in the western part of Bonaventure cannot easily get there on account of the precarious air and maritime transportation between Bonaventure and Magdalen Islands. Besides, air services between Gaspé or between Prince Edward Island and Magdalen Islands are extremely hazardous in winter because of frequent and severe storms. Fourthly, the insular mentality of the people of Magdalen Islands is necessarily and inevitably different.

It is easy to realize that the Îles-de-la-Madeleine must be dealt with in a special way, and we understand thus the vigorous reaction of its citizens regarding the disappearance of the riding which had been established since 1947, under the Electoral Boundaries Act.

The Îles-de-la-Madeleine have had most distinguished representatives. The first one was the father-in-law of the hon. member for Sherbrooke (Mr. Gervais), the hon. Charles Cannon, Justice of the Quebec Superior Court; the second one was the ex-member for Gaspé, Mr. Russell Keays; the third one, no less distinguished, was the hon. Maurice Sauvé, and since the Îles-de-la-Madeleine are linked up with Bonaventure, I have the great honour of representing the Madelinots, whom I esteem deeply.

It was specially in recognition of these characteristic features of the Madelinots and of their almost unique needs that Parliament has established, in 1947, an independent riding called "Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine".

From this time on, the Madelinots have felt more secure, having their own representative, their own member of the House of Commons, to look after them only and to deal with their problems, without having to deal with situations foreign to the Îles-de-la-Madeleine, as had been the concern of the member for Gaspé, and as it is for the member for Bonaventure.

• (5:10 p.m.)

Mr. Chairman, one must understand those feelings which are not only those of the citizens of the Îles-de-la-Madeleine but of all Canadian citizens, from Vancouver to Saint Johns, Newfoundland. So, from that time, the Madelinots were sure of having their own representative whose feelings were not divided.

That is why they reacted strongly when the riding disappeared, as they were losing, or so they thought, their real representative, their personal representative with the federal authorities. As the reason given for this change was that the population of the Islands was not large enough, it has appeared impossible, at least until now, to modify the situation and to give back a representative to the Îles-de-la-Madeleine Islands. So, this problem will be dealt with at the next census. The least that can be done for the Islands now, is to grant them some identity by adding the former name of their riding to that of Bonaventure.

The new name I am proposing is more in keeping with the geographic reality of my riding, and will enable to avoid much confusion while at the same time reflecting the pride of my Island electors who have joined my electors from Bonaventure since 1968.

Public Bills

So, I ask the House and the Committee to support this amendment, for which the citizens from the Islands and their representative will be forever grateful.

[English]

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Chairman, I shall speak for a moment only because I realize that two or three other bills are to follow. I think it is ironic that the hon. member whose bill is before the House is the very individual who, two or three weeks ago, talked out my private members' bill. That only shows how inadequate is our method of dealing with bills arising in private members hour.

Some hon. Members: Shame.

[Translation]

Mr. Béchard: I wish to inform the hon. member that I have never spoken until 6 o'clock on a bill designed to change the name of his constituency.

[English]

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Chairman, it is not my fault if the hon. member has a bad memory. If he looks at the record he will discover that he was the last speaker on that occasion.

Mr. Béchard: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. I think the hon. member did not understand what I said. I said that I have never talked out a bill sponsored by the hon. member to change the name of his riding.

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Chairman, my bill was not for changing the name of my riding. It dealt with the abolition of corporal punishment. I will not deal with that now. Obviously, that is not the purpose of this bill. The purpose of this bill is to change the name of the hon. member's constituency.

He has pointed out the most difficult problems encountered in this area, the greatest being the effect of redistribution on an area which originally was represented by its own Member of Parliament. Its status was altered and, in the redistribution of ridings which came into effect in the 1968 election, Îles-de-la-Madeleine was joined with a constituency on the mainland of Quebec.

I realize that the parliamentary secretary has been suggesting that he has presented a simple matter for the consideration of the House. However, as the hon. member conceded in speaking to his own bill, substantial problems must be considered. Îles-de-la-Madeleine has such a small population, when compared with the average size of constituencies, that it was not possible in the view of the boundaries readjustment commission which met, I think, in 1965 and 1966, to establish the area as a separate constituency. Yet it is quite obvious that the interests and concerns of the people of Îles-de-la-Madeleine are different from the interests and concerns of those who live in the mainland of Quebec. I say this because I come from Prince Edward Island. We have a number of close ties.

The hon. member spoke of a lack of airline communication between Îles-de-la-Madeleine and the rest of his riding. There is direct communication from Prince