

As explained by the sponsor of the bill, it provides two months for the establishment of the commission, a year in which they must do their work, 60 days in which to resolve doubts over their recommendations. This in all represents 14 months. Honourable senators will see that it will take a long time to effect this redistribution.

On the basis of 25 per cent tolerance, experts tell us that virtually every riding in Canada will be changed. We can see what a tremendous task lies ahead for party organizations, for candidates, and for others to adapt themselves to a totally different constituency map. Estimates of the time required to perform this task range from three months to six months. The latter period mentioned may seem close to a minimum.

The work of the commissions will not be completed, taking the present redistribution, until about mid-March 1966. When the political parties have completed their adaptation to the new boundaries, it will be mid-September 1966 before the country will be ready to hold an election based on this redistribution bill. If a general election is held before then, one wonders if the country will be receiving fair representation based on the population distribution of Canada as returned in the 1951 census and 1952 electoral map.

The bill reduces to a minimum the possible gerrymandering which has been mentioned several times, both by the sponsor of the bill and by myself. This is a most desirable improvement. There is, no doubt, a lack of enthusiasm among some members, not because gerrymandering is reduced to a minimum but because some members of the House of Commons see their constituencies absolutely disappearing under this new arrangement, and this would naturally make them quite disturbed and unhappy.

The sponsor of the bill has mentioned a glaring contrast in city populations. He mentioned the Magdalen Islands, as we call them, with a population of only 13,000, and compared that with York-Scarborough with 267,000 persons. Of course, when you look at populations, there is no comparison at all. We must remember that the Magdalens are little islands far out in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and they have many problems that York-Scarborough never dreamed of. Nevertheless, there is too much discrepancy and it will have to be changed.

Honourable senators, I have more notes here, but I shall not weary you by further comments. There has been general agreement on this bill by practically all members of the House of Commons. In this chamber, there is no objection on our side of the house. Furthermore, as far as I can see, there is no reason

why this bill should be sent to a committee, in view of that general agreement.

Hon. Jacques Flynn: Honourable senators, I have very little to say because, as my Leader has already mentioned, practically everything has been said, if not here, at least in the other place.

We are in agreement with the three main principles involved in this bill, the first being to put an end to gerrymandering which has taken place in previous redistributions; the second, to keep for Parliament, and especially for the House of Commons, a certain control over this problem of redistribution; the third, to apply as far as feasible the principle of equal representation for every vote.

It is not the fault of any particular party or government if this bill is not passed until three years after the 1961 census has been completed, with the result that the new redistribution or the new electoral map will come into force only at the end of 1966. However, this may point to some weakness in our system. If another election should take place before the new electoral map comes into being, the consequence could be that the distribution based on the 1961 census would not serve during the 10 years between 1961 and 1971. In such a case the new electoral map could serve only for an election in 1971, right at a time when, in practice, we would be taking another census.

I am wondering, therefore, if some study should not be given to a method which would be more efficient and quicker. I have been wondering whether one year is not too long, and if we could not provide for a shorter delay than one year for each provincial commission to report. In fact, each commission will have all the elements to work with right from the beginning. There will be no delay, for everything has been prepared by the Bureau of Statistics and by the electoral commissioner. Some time could be saved in that way.

Honourable senators, I merely point out that under circumstances like this, which have prevailed since the end of the 1961 census, what we are proposing to do here may not have any practical result, and may really not serve the purpose before it is time to take another census and perhaps another electoral map.

I have already mentioned—and this is a question of detail—that section 6 of the bill does not make it clear who is going to appoint the chairman of each provincial commission, and the sponsor of the bill (Hon. Mr. Power) does not know.

Hon. Mr. Power: Although I know something of the difficulties which exist in Quebec with respect to the protocol about this matter,