

sons I must say that I had complete confidence in the hon. member for Cumberland (Mr. Smith), who represented the province of Nova Scotia from this side of the house.

But one or two observations by my hon. friend from Shelburne-Yarmouth (Mr. Ralston) require a word or two in reply, but I shall endeavour to compress what I have to say in the fewest possible sentences because it is not my desire at this stage of the session to delay the committee.

My hon. friend from Shelburne-Yarmouth, in his opening remarks, made a statement capable of a party and political interpretation which the facts do not warrant. For example, he said that under the Conservative redistribution of 1914 the county of Pictou was dismembered. Let me point out to my hon. friend that that statement is not accurate. It is true that there was a Conservative redistribution in 1914, but my hon. friend has either overlooked or forgotten or neglected to remind the committee that the committee on redistribution at that time had upon it, as the committee of to-day has, representatives of the different parties in the house, and the Liberal party in the province of Nova Scotia was at that time represented by a very astute politician, E. M. Macdonald, afterwards, as is well known, a member of the administration of my right hon. friend the leader of the opposition (Mr. Mackenzie King). That committee brought in a report, and if hon. members opposite are interested they will find reference to that report in the journals of the house for the year 1914, at page 673. It is as follows:

Your committee have prepared and unanimously agreed to report upon the description and the return of members contained in the several electoral divisions, which are set forth in the schedules hereto appended, in respect to the provinces of Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Manitoba, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Alberta and the Yukon Territory and upon the description and the return of the several electoral divisions which are set forth in the schedule hereto appended, in respect to the province of Nova Scotia, with the exception of that portion of the last named schedule which relates to the return of two members for the proposed united counties of South Cape Breton and Richmond, in the province of Nova Scotia, to which a majority of your committee have agreed.

In other words the division of Digby county was at that time agreed upon, not only in the committee by Mr. Macdonald, the then member for Pictou, but unanimously by all parties in the house. I recall that we had a whole day's discussion with regard to the constituency of Richmond West-Cape Breton. But there was not one

[Mr. Rhodes.]

word of objection taken either then or afterwards, in the House of Commons or in the country, so far as I am aware, with respect to the division of the constituency of Digby.

So, for the purpose of accuracy I wish to correct my hon. friend, because he has left the impression that the division of the constituency of Digby in the first instance was attributable to the Conservative administration of that day. My hon. friend characteristically has left himself in this position: He has taken exception to the redistribution, particularly with regard to the manner in which it has been effected so far as the mainland of the province of Nova Scotia is concerned, but he has taken care not to place on record any alternative proposal. To begin with I point out that salient fact. My hon. friend attempted to suggest that the Prime Minister had not been true to his professions when he suggested that we should maintain county boundaries. That has always been construed, not only in the province of Nova Scotia but elsewhere, as municipal boundaries—county boundaries if possible, but if a county has to be severed, then you must come to recognize the municipality.

Mr. RALSTON: It does not have to be severed.

Mr. RHODES: My hon. friend states it does not have to be severed, but I point out to him that the first variance which took place in Nova Scotia was in Digby, and was agreed to by all parties. But what are the alternatives? I will tell him the alternative suggested by his colleague upon the committee, the hon. member for Hants-Kings (Mr. Ilsley). His alternative was what?—to truncate the constituency of Pictou, that is to say, without reference to county, municipal, township or other boundaries, to sever it by drawing a lead pencil through the map. That was the suggestion made by the hon. member for Hants-Kings, and the only concrete proposal in opposition to the one suggested.

For the first time, so far as I am aware, my hon. friend has indicated that the redistribution in the province of Nova Scotia was dictated by political motives. I can assure him that a careful and close analysis of the results of redistribution as effected by this bill will indicate that the Conservative party, assuming that at the next election the voting population remains in the same position as it is to-day, stands to lose and not to gain by the proposals. In the first place, on the island of Cape Breton there are four seats to-day represented by Conservatives. One