

Redistribution

agree that there would have been, and his seat would not have been in it.

There would have been no constituency of Rosetown-Biggar running down south of the river. There could not have been enough population obtained to put a seat there at all unless it did run south of the river because of the very situation outlined a few moments ago by the hon. member for Lake Centre, namely, that is a part of the province that is going down in population and going down very rapidly. Because it is a part of the province that is going down very rapidly and because of the fact that two additional seats had been put into Saskatchewan largely because of the difficulty that would have been involved in trying to make an adjustment of 25 per cent in population with relation to the population in other provinces in any one redistribution, we were given special consideration. I think we treated that special consideration in the manner in which it was intended to be treated by leaving the constituency of Rosetown-Biggar there with the result that the leader of that party does not have to contest the seat with any other member of the house.

And then this paragraph:

That was the first consideration and the committee acted upon it. If anyone wants to know what the opinion of the Saskatchewan caucus was on that question that was their opinion. The committee of three appointed by that caucus was definitely instructed that there had to be a seat of Rosetown-Biggar when the map was drawn no matter how it was drawn and that it had to remain there because of the special consideration we had been given.

I am sure the people in Rosetown-Biggar constituency will be very glad indeed that that constituency is to be preserved, and I am very happy indeed that I may be able, I hope, to retain my association with Rosetown-Biggar as long as I am a member of the house—which I hope will still be some considerable time. But I wish to say frankly that if the preservation of the constituency for which I sit has given rise to any injustices or great difficulties in other parts of that province, I regret very much that that consideration has been given.

In my opinion it is not the individual who should be considered in connection with a redistribution; it is the constituents. As I say, I am very happy that this consideration was given to my electors, and I say "Thank you" to members of the committee for it; but at the same time I think it is wrong to decide it that way. Had the constituency of Rosetown-Biggar been taken out, and had the population in that constituency been divided, undoubtedly, had I been invited to do so, I would have been happy to accept nomination in that part of the province where the bulk of the constituency was to be placed; or, indeed, I might even have considered accepting an invitation, if it were tendered to me, to run elsewhere in the province of Saskatchewan.

But I wish to be perfectly clear about this, that at no time either to my own colleagues on that committee, or to any other person,

did I suggest that, if the redistribution presented difficulties, then at all costs Rosetown-Biggar should be preserved. And I see the chairman of the committee agrees with that, completely. That is a fact, and I wish to make it clear.

But even at this late stage, if reconsideration is to be given, and although I would regret exceedingly if Rosetown-Biggar were to be changed in any way from what it is, as well as the name of it, if justice demands that it should be done, then I wish hon. members to know that I am not standing in the way of doing justice in the matter.

Mr. Gardiner: Mr. Chairman, I just wish to say that the remarks of the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggar are absolutely correct. He did not make any representation, nor did anyone make any representations on his behalf so far as I know, in connection with the matter. It was simply dealt with as I have described.

Mr. Fleming: I have one or two comments to make arising out of the statement the Prime Minister made this morning. I am glad he has spoken on the subject. I indicated when I spoke earlier that I thought the Prime Minister should speak to the house, and I am glad he has.

He has not been in the house very much during the course of the debate.

Mr. St. Laurent: I have read all the debates.

Mr. Fleming: I would expect that. Therefore I think I should tell the Prime Minister that he has quite misapprehended the position taken not only by the leader of the opposition but by other members of this party who have spoken in connection with the schedule. So far as I am aware, there never was any suggestion from any member of the opposition who has participated in the debate that under no circumstances should the changing of seats affect Progressive Conservative members. On the contrary, member after member has recognized the fact that there is nothing static about conditions; that changes have to be made in constituency boundaries to meet changes in population; that there may be decreases or increases or shifts here and there.

I wish to say to the Prime Minister that in every case in the subcommittees, as well as in the house, where a particular change proposed by his party majority in the committee was made, which was unacceptable to the opposition, an alternative was proposed on behalf of the opposition in the committee. In every one of the cases that have been most acutely disputed in the course of this debate the opposition offered an alternative that