

Redistribution Commission

a vastly different problem in serving a constituency scattered over an area 150 miles in both directions than in serving an urban area where a member can walk down a street and talk to someone. In other words, in a compact area all of your problems are centralized and it is much easier to get around to the various parts of your constituency.

Now, I mention this because I believe that in considering the principle of representation by population in connection with redistribution, a tolerance of at least 40 per cent should be given to rural areas. In other words, the theory of representation by population is all right as far as it goes. It is also necessary to recognize that a member of this House of Commons not only represents the people in his constituency but also the constituency itself, with all the natural conditions and natural resources with which he is familiar. He must also serve the people working on the resources in his constituency, scattered as they are throughout the riding. There is a tremendous amount of travelling involved, and so on.

I go even further, Mr. Chairman. My constituency is not the largest in the dominion by any means; I am not suggesting that. I could cite many others which have a much greater area than Macleod. One hon. member has mentioned the Northwest Territories, which is a tremendous area. People in the house who represent rural areas believe we must have a tolerance when it comes to representation by population, and this tolerance must be at least 40 per cent in favour of the rural constituencies. There is another factor which I hope the Secretary of State, the commissions and those who may be giving direction with regard to this measure will take into consideration. I believe that in so far as possible the people living in a constituency should be left there. If an addition is to be made, all well and good. If something is to be subtracted, that is equally well and good. But to take people from one side of a boundary and add them to another would simply cause great confusion to the constituents of a riding. People become accustomed to looking to the constituency in which they have lived for a number of years. For example, those who live in Bonavista-Twillingate look to that constituency as being the one in which they belong, and if they were suddenly pulled out of that riding and put into another there would be a great deal of confusion in their minds.

An hon. Member: They would be delighted.

Mr. Kindt: It would also mean that the people moved would take a considerable time to catch up with the facts of another constituency. The same would be true of the

riding of Macleod. For these reasons, Mr. Chairman, I believe that wherever it is possible the commissions that will be working under this legislation should keep intact the boundaries and the people now living within the constituency of which they have become part. In other words, the constituency of Macleod has 51,000 people in it, and if it is necessary to subtract or add to that constituency in order to bring it up to some over-all average, I believe it is not necessary to take from one side and add to another. The constituency should be added to in a way that would not disturb the people now living there.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I would say that the remarks I have made this evening are only by way of preamble, because we have not before us the bill that will be introduced in this regard. When that bill is introduced there will be an opportunity to study and comment on its provisions.

Mr. Dinsdale: Mr. Chairman, when the resolution was first introduced I did not intend to speak at this stage in the debate. After hearing the Secretary of State on that occasion making his rather interesting approach and presentation of this very important matter, and having come to the conclusion that the government's consideration of this new approach to redistribution is still in a somewhat fluid state, I thought it would be best to make my comments before we passed the resolution.

In introducing the resolution the Secretary of State pointed out that it was the desire of the government, as it had been the intention of the previous government, once and for all to get this matter of the redistribution of seats in the House of Commons, which follows automatically after every decennial census, out of the hands of the politicians themselves. I think all hon. members of the house will agree that this reform is long overdue. Indeed, if one looks back at the history of the discussion of the measure in the house, he is invariably surprised that it has taken so long for parliament to come to grips with this obvious abuse. For anyone who has been a member of the House of Commons for a number of years, particularly during a period when redistribution has taken place, has had forcibly brought home to him, from personal experience, the fact that there is indeed a better method of dealing with the redistribution of parliamentary constituencies than any of those which have been used hitherto.

I have experienced one redistribution in this house, that which was carried out following the census of 1951. It was obvious on that occasion that the objective approach was not taken in handling this difficult problem.