

it was clearly stated that full tolerance would be allowed to ensure that rural areas were fairly and properly represented. This is not the case under the present proposals. In the proposals for Manitoba the name of the federal constituency of Marquette disappears. Marquette has been the name of a Manitoba riding since confederation. In the early days Marquette was represented by Sir John A. Macdonald, our first Prime Minister. We feel that an historical name such as Marquette should be retained. This question should be taken into consideration whenever redistribution is discussed.

● (1620)

I want to make a very important point regarding the present commission. There are no representatives from the rural areas of Manitoba on the boundaries commission, and we feel strongly that all future commissions should include representatives from rural areas. Parliament, and the role of a member of parliament, have changed drastically in the last ten years. At one time the House of Commons was in session for only six months of the year and a member could spend six months in his riding communicating with and learning his constituents' problems. Today, the House is usually in session nine to ten months a year and being a federal member is definitely a full-time job. Citizens like to see their member of parliament and know the man who represents them. With the rural ridings being so large, this is impossible. As an example, in the 1971 summer recess I put 15,000 miles on my car in a two-month period touring the riding of Marquette, and even then I did not reach all parts of the riding. This is a ridiculous situation, yet under the proposals the rural ridings will increase again in size by half.

When the late Right Hon. Lester B. Pearson was prime minister he tried to bring Ottawa closer to the people. He made it possible for a member to take one air trip a week to his riding when the House was in session. Previously, only Ontario and Quebec members returned to their ridings regularly. One trip a week for all members meant that all areas of Canada were treated equally. However, for this system to work effectively rural ridings must follow natural travel patterns. In the new ridings of Dauphin and Portage, because of the area they cover and natural barriers it is virtually impossible to cover them effectively.

I should like to return to the reason the electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act provides that a rural riding can be 25 per cent below the normal quotient for a constituency in any given province. It is well known that a rural riding has many issues to contend with which come under federal jurisdiction and do not affect urban ridings to the same extent. I believe that the constituency of Marquette is a typical rural riding. Let us look at Marquette and the areas of concern that face many rural ridings.

First, we have the Riding Mountain national park which creates many problems that face only rural areas. Second, in Marquette we have four Indian reservations. Admittedly, our native people face many problems in the cities, but there are no reservations in the urban areas. Third, in Marquette we have Camp Shilo. Usually, military training bases are located in rural areas because of the high cost of real estate and the large land area required. Fourth, transportation presents problems. In Marquette we have the Trans-Canada Highway and the Yellowhead route, two

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transcontinental rail lines plus numerous branch lines which seriously affect the future movement of grain to world markets.

Fifth, although we border Lake Manitoba, commercial fishing does not affect Marquette as much as it does some rural ridings. However, in Marquette experiments have been conducted. Farmers' sloughs were stocked in the spring with fingerling trout and marketable fish were recovered from the sloughs in the fall. This has been called fish farming and we expect great development and advancement in this industry.

My last and main point concerns agriculture. Agriculture is still this nation's second largest industry. Because it is the nation's second largest industry and the fact that it takes huge areas of our country for this industry to function, it is imperative that farmers be given complete regional representation in Ottawa. As an example, urban areas are not concerned about the Canadian Wheat Board, PFRA, community pastures or the many other facets of agriculture. We must have representatives from the rural areas who understand these problems and can speak out for the farmer.

There are other points that I could make, but these are six reasons why the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act must protect the rural areas and give them fair representation in parliament. There is no reason under the act why any Manitoba rural riding must have a population of over 65,000. When the new proposals were announced for the province of Manitoba last January, because of the concern expressed by many people we felt that in order to keep the briefs non-political they should be presented to the hearings of the Manitoba Electoral Boundaries Commission by an elected representative at the municipal level of government. All mayors and reeves were contacted and meetings were held. This involved 41 councils which represented all the towns and rural municipalities in the constituency of Marquette.

It is a clear fact that by resolution or by presenting a brief at the commission hearings in either Portage la Prairie or Brandon, all 41 councils opposed the proposed boundary changes. It must be a unique situation in Canada when all municipal councils in one constituency oppose boundary changes. At the time of the Manitoba commission hearings in Brandon I asked that the present proposals be scrapped and protection be given to the rural areas of the province. It is only fair that we protect the rural way of life, a way of life that is cherished by many. As pointed out by many other speakers, most countries give recognition to area and regional representation. I feel that Canada must do this, and I support this bill.

Mr. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, my participation in this debate marks the fourth or fifth time that I have taken part in debates in the House of Commons since the House began its sittings in January. Other members have spoken much more than me. I have deliberately remained in my seat during several of the debates because I believe that, as a new member, one of the most important things I can do here in Ottawa is to learn more about the issues which affect our country so that any contribution I make to our deliberations can be reasoned and coherent. However, from time to time issues arise that require a member of