

the context of a favoured son or daughter ideal, must give consideration to our colleagues from the great urban ridings and agree that probably they are entitled to more representation based on their population. I do not think we should go back to the old days that were mentioned, when "rep by pop" was the slogan. In those days a great part of Canada was populated on a much more even basis, in respect of rural and urban areas, than it is today. In those earlier days, and until recent years, Canadians were classed as drawers of water and hewers of wood. A great part of our population derived its living in rural areas.

Through listening to this debate I have learned from my very knowledgeable and well educated colleagues that this problem is a hiatus. I wonder if their constituents are as knowledgeable as they are. I have also learned from the hon. member for St. Paul's (Mr. Atkey) that certain areas are exacerbated. That is really a "50-center." In real English, putting it on the line for my own people, I believe that means rubbing salt on the tender part of the wound, or whatever part it may be. I wanted to clear that up.

A great many members have repeated, verbatim, speeches they made previously on this same matter. I spoke on this question, I believe on July 9. My remarks are on the record and I do not intend to repeat them. However, I do wish to mention one or two things which I believe should be mentioned. The city members told us they have a really difficult job. One member, the hon. member for St. Paul's, measured his riding—as was mentioned today—in minutes; five minutes by 15 minutes. I believe that is the measurement of his riding, and I do not believe he is the world's fastest walker or runner.

A great many rural ridings would be measured in terms of days and weeks. It is on that basis that rural members feel they cannot properly look after as many constituents as a city member. I might point out that the hon. member for York East (Mr. Arrol), a fine member and a colleague, who spoke earlier today mentioned a letter he had sent to his constituents in York East. In this letter he listed 25 telephone numbers and 25 departments. It does not matter what a person wants, all he has to do is pick up the telephone and automatically the department answers. This would apply, I suppose, in the great city of Montreal and in other large urban centres.

What is the situation in respect of a rural member? In his case there would be only one phone number, the member's. This is another "plus" for the city member. I appreciate the position of my colleague from Fraser Valley East (Mr. Patterson) who just spoke. British Columbia is being discriminated against. I concede that. I suppose the city of Toronto is being discriminated against. Of course, this happens to be the only item in 10,000 in respect of which they are discriminated against. Everything else is a "plus" in their favour.

On this particular basis we must agree that something should be done, but surely the city members would agree that when there is a larger territory to be looked after in a proper manner, the member should not have to be on the run all the time. Perhaps something can be done. Parliament moves slowly: I have learned that in my six months and a few day here. However, perhaps parliament can do something in this case.

Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Suspension

I appreciate that the commissions had a difficult job. In my particular case the commission, in its wisdom, came up with a description figure of 84,000. In rural areas a variation is allowed of 25 per cent. This would bring my constituency down to about 62,000. However, they placed in my riding an extra little corner which, for the information of my city colleagues, includes 22 townships. Most of the city constituencies could be placed in one township and be lost. In addition, we have the county of Haliburton. I am supposed to do a good job in respect of it. If I am left with it, perhaps I shall be able to do a good job, but I think this is asking a little too much.

Parliament might be able to come up with some suggestions for the benefit of the city members. Perhaps we could give British Columbia three more members. I will not mention Ontario. However, we might give five seats to southern Ontario. We could steal two seats from northern Ontario. So we are going to give southern Ontario five seats. I feel that Quebec should not have hers taken away, either. I am hoping that a new plan can be devised for revision of the boundaries in this country within 18 months. I think that 12 months is asking for the impossible.

• (1630)

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a few comments on the amendment that stands in the name of the hon. member for Peel South (Mr. Blenkarn). In doing so I should like to refer to the tenor of the remarks made by the hon. member for Fraser Valley East (Mr. Patterson) who, at least in my view, sought to create the impression that this was a particular responsibility of the government, that it was an initiative taken solely by the government without relation to the sentiments expressed by members of parliament since the beginning of this parliament.

In the course of this debate the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker), in his short intervention, made it clear that he was the first person in the House who insisted that action should be taken to deal with this problem that has now been dealt with by the House of Commons. I ask hon. members to take a look at the order paper and at the objections that have been filed by members of this House from all parties, objections against the results of the present over-all framework under which we are operating.

These objections came streaming in from members of the House. They came from the provinces of Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Quebec, Manitoba, Alberta, Ontario, and Saskatchewan. Read the objections and you will find that probably the only way to meet the objections that have been expressed by members of the House of Commons is to try to look at the over-all framework under which we are operating at present.

It should not be a secret that the proposals that are contained in this bill were fully canvassed by representatives of all parties in the House. It was my view from the very beginning that if the official representative of any of the parties said we should not proceed with this, we would not have done so. However, all the representatives of the parties—speaking not for every member, because I under-