

Act stipulates that the electoral quota for the riding should be 82,143. However, if one considers that the Act permits a variance of 25 per cent plus or minus that figure to an upward maximum at 102,679 and a low of 61,607 Nickel Belt at 85,000 fits quite comfortably in the middle and very much within the guidelines.

However, the damage inflicted on the cohesion of my riding by the random search for numbers—and I say “random”, mere numbers—far outweighs any cosmetic, statistical advantage gained in shoring up the figures of less densely populated ridings. If the goal is to preserve 11 or 12 northern Ontario ridings, I firmly believe more logical and less disruptive alternatives exist.

In making the case for preservation of portions of my riding which are threatened by redistribution, I have the added confidence of knowing that there is virtually unanimous local opposition to the proposed changes. I would say that the reaction to the boundary changes contradicts and refutes the conclusion of a recent Gallup survey that Canadians believe their Parliament is irrelevant. The response to the redistribution proposals has been overwhelmingly negative and, I might add, very emotional, indicating to me that the people's attachment to their riding runs deep and has a very personal significance.

Let me put on record just a few of the comments I have received. First, from the Township of Ratter & Dunnet, I quote:

It would create a great hardship for the voters to have to adjust to such drastic changes. The Timiskaming constituency office is located in Kirkland Lake, this being some 200 miles away from Warren, making it practically impossible for residents to meet with their MP.

From Phil Bonhomme, councillor of the Town of Nickel Centre, I quote:

Logic dictates that radical shifts create chaos, additional costs and leave the public in a state of frustration.

From the Corporation of the Township of Casimir, Jennings and Appleby, I quote:

I am sure you can appreciate the effect it would have on our small community to have our town cut in half by this decision to use the Highway 535 to determine the boundary of these ridings.

From the Regional Development Corporation of Sudbury, I quote:

It is our strong belief that if the Regional Municipality of Sudbury is to continue to strive for economic diversification, it must do so as a strong and united force, especially in its dealings with the senior levels of government. To lose the Town of Nickel Centre to the Timiskaming riding would result in a fragmentation of this united front, thereby creating a negative impact on the region's economic development aspirations.

From a brief submitted by the Town of Nickel Centre, I quote:

The entire Sudbury regional community is astonished by the commission's decision. There has been no advance notification of the commission's intention to remove the town from the Nickel Belt riding, nor was there an opportunity for a public hearing on this latest proposal. There is a deep feeling that the community's interests, both present and traditional, affecting the Town of Nickel Centre, have not been respected.

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In addition to the representations I have just quoted are resolutions from the councils of the Regional Municipality of Sudbury, Capreol, Onaping Falls, Walden, Valley East and the City of Sudbury. I have received a tide of personal letters from concerned citizens, not only from the affected areas but from all parts of Nickel Belt, reinforcing the obvious kinship the communities of my riding feel for each other. I have received petitions containing hundreds of names which I am prepared to submit to the House.

I cannot adequately express, Mr. Speaker, how strong the feelings are in opposition to this proposed change, a change which I must restate came completely unexpectedly, a change which we feel is so ridiculous it could not have been anticipated at the hearing of the Commission. This is our last chance to fight for the continued harmony of the communities of Nickel Belt and I cannot help but feel as if one of my own, one of my family, is about to be taken away. We are threatened by an absurdity, a Kafkaesque predicament.

[Translation]

There is no logic, no sensitivity to local dissatisfaction with the decision to draw the boundary between Nickel Centre and Nickel Belt through the middle of St. Charles. I cannot and will not believe that the Commission cannot understand that this mad chase after figures to meet certain quotas will never justify the distressing state of affairs that would result if this proposal were to be implemented.

• (1430)

[English]

I know each Hon. Member feels fiercely protective of his or her constituents, as do I. I know they can appreciate when justice or reason is, or in this case is not, being served. I know the commission in its wisdom will take another look at this proposal and recognize that it makes no sense whatsoever and will restore Nickel Belt to its original state.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Hon. Members for giving me this time to present my objections.

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Speaker, if there is a disposition, and if there are no other participants in the objections raised by the Hon. Member, we would be happy to have the debate with respect to that objection adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Debate, item No. 19. The Hon. Member for Algoma (Mr. Foster).

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, I want to add a few words to the debate commenced by the Hon. Member for Nickel Belt (Mrs. Erola). I appreciate her concern with the redistribution which occurred in her constituency.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Order, please. My apologies for interrupting the Hon. Member, but the Chair has made an error. Following the remarks by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. Erola) there is a period of ten minutes for questions and answers should any