

and historical patterns. It is not even good enough, as Bill C-74 does—and it has never been done before—to say that when dealing with the northern regions of the provinces with vast geographic areas, they will be allowed to depart from the 25 per cent differential allowed in the Act now. That clause is so imprecise, vague and uncertain that I predict it will be of no use to a boundary commission. Rarely will boundary commissions ever call upon that clause. Perhaps the Government House Leader will say that they have responded to our concerns, that they understand our concerns, and that they have included this clause which allows the boundary commissions to exceed the 25 per cent. If he says that our needs have been met, that we should support the Bill and be happy, it will not work that way because the boundary commissions will say: "You have been too imprecise; you should give us much clearer and unambiguous guidelines". This is why northern Ontario Members of Parliament are arguing for what other parts of the country have, like the Province of Saskatchewan, for example. The populations of Saskatchewan and Northern Ontario are not all that different. The population of Saskatchewan is slightly larger, but it is guaranteed 14 seats. Northern Ontario is much larger in area than Saskatchewan. In fact, our population is just over 800,000 people, whereas the population of Saskatchewan is about 900,000 people. Saskatchewan is guaranteed 14 seats. We are saying that northern Ontario should be guaranteed, in the same way, about 11 seats.

● (1120)

I want to illustrate clearly for Members who may not be aware of how boundary commissions work why this vague clause on manageability in northern regions will not work. Boundary commissioners are busy people. They are taken from the bench or law faculties, and this obligation is placed upon them by Parliament. I do not think they exactly welcome the task because it is not a pleasant and enjoyable duty. However, they are distinguished citizens of this country and accept that obligation.

First, the commission hires bright young demographers and staffers who take the available figures and produce the first set of maps. It is on the basis of this first set of maps that the various electoral boundary commissions in the provinces travel throughout the country for the public hearing stage. Individual citizens, citizen groups or a Member of Parliament may prepare the most compelling briefs imaginable. The electoral boundary commission will listen carefully to all of the ideas for changes that are suggested in the brief and examine the evidence it has received. However, I ask Members of the House if they really believe that no matter how good the quality of those briefs may be, the electoral boundary commission will make radical changes in that first set of maps. Of course not. Once significant changes are made in one region, it begins to affect every other region. That is why there will only be minor modifications and no significant ones.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** I regret but the Hon. Member's time has expired. He still has the questions and comments period.

### *Representation Act, 1985*

**Mr. Marchi:** Mr. Speaker, in the spirit of your last comment, I want to ask the Hon. Member for Cochrane-Superior (Mr. Penner) simply to wrap up his speech and perhaps make his final few points to the House. He is certainly well respected on all sides in terms of his credibility and knowledge about the whole question of boundary alignment.

Would he use a couple of minutes to finish his speech, in the spirit that you, Mr. Speaker, had urged on the House with respect to the question and answer period remaining to the Hon. Member?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** I know that he will have some questions that he would like to answer. I am sure the Hon. Member for Cochrane-Superior wishes to make some other comments. I am sure that the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Government House Leader will listen very carefully to the Hon. Member, who has been here for 17 years and can tell us more about what is happening as far as his riding is concerned.

**Mr. Lewis:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Naturally we would want to give every Member of the House every opportunity to speak during this debate. There has never been any suggestion that we were trying to cut off debate or stifle comments. With that spirit in mind, we are prepared to listen to the Hon. Member. However, we would not want it to become a habit that Members can use this time to wrap up their speech.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** I appreciate that. I am sure the Hon. Member will conclude his remarks in two minutes so that he can respond to questions and comments.

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Speaker, the House has been generous. I only have one additional point which is specific to northern Ontario and the effect that Bill C-74 will eventually have on northern Ontario. Let me say why I believe it violates an even larger principle, namely, the principle of effective and co-operative federalism. The effect of Bill C-74 on northern Ontario will be to dilute and dilute even further the level of representation. As a result of Bill C-74 our present level of 11 seats could very easily be reduced to 10 or perhaps 9 seats by 1988. It is conceivable that in the next century, northern Ontario—being most of the province incidentally—could have only 4 or 5 seats. Where will those additional seats go? They will go to the City of Toronto.

**An Hon. Member:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Penner:** An Hon. Member says: "Hear, hear". They will go to the conurbation that is now spreading in both directions from Toronto. Of course, the people who live there need to be well represented, and no one argues against that all. However, does it make sense to have 60 Members representing Toronto and its immediate environs and only 4 or 5 Members for the remaining 88 per cent of the resource rich part of the province? Is that the way in which we would have effective federalism? Ours is a resource region that contributes a tremendous amount to the national economy. It is a region of the