

Electoral Boundaries Commission

Canada. I said, and I repeat, that I do not think the farmers or agriculturists have asked for a heavier representation in the house; it is done to assist the member to better represent the area from which he comes.

Therefore I say that if we wished to have true representation by population we would repeal the whole of section 51 and the other rules that apply. I think we should make certain in the act itself that the commission set up is an independent body. I will discuss this question more fully when the particular clause comes before the committee, but I think it should be set out very clearly that the head of that commission should be the chief justice of the province or a member of a superior court appointed by him. It says as worded now, "from his court". That might be interpreted to mean merely the court of appeal, which would include the remaining three or four judges. Perhaps the chief justice would feel that, because the act suggests his appointment he has an obligation or responsibility to appoint someone other than himself. But whether the chief justice of one province or another has been appointed by a Conservative or by a Liberal government, I want to say that in the 20 years in which I have been before the bar I have found, particularly with men at the chief justice level, that they are not only steeped in jurisprudence but have been carefully chosen not only because of their wisdom but because of their public relations ability to understand all forms and levels of human behaviour. I feel that a man of that calibre is the kind we need to head these commissions, if we are to have ten commissions in Canada, or if we are going to have just one commission with sub-committees, whichever the case may be. The bill at the present time proposes to set up ten separate commissions.

With regard to placing an objection before the commission itself. I think that ten days is not long enough and that it should be extended to 60 days or even longer. I would also ask whether the objectors are going to be armed with all the information. First of all, they should be allowed to see the proposed maps of the province delineating the constituencies and what each constituency will contain by way of population, so as to enable them to decide whether they have real objection. Probably that is the reason that the tolerance figure should be enlarged to 30 or 35 per cent, because it is just impossible for some areas to be represented by one member of parliament only owing to its diversification. For example, I draw the analogy of my own riding, which has the tourist trade of Banff, coal mining in Canmore and Drumheller, the

[Mr. Woolliams.]

ranchers in the foothills and the wheat growers around Drumheller. There is a great diversification of industry in the province and it might be better that those people with similar interests be in one area.

The Chairman: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but his time expired at four o'clock; in view of the interruptions I thought he should be allowed an additional five minutes.

Mr. Pickersgill: If the hon. member has a sentence or two perhaps the committee would be tolerant, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Woolliams: Well, I am just finishing. I feel that wherever possible the constituencies will keep the nucleus which they have. If the constituencies are going to be enlarged, it is far better that the nucleus be retained because those people residing in the constituencies have often lived there for years. Sometimes their fathers and grandfathers have grown up in constituencies like Bow River, Saskatoon, Regina or Winnipeg. So wherever possible the nucleus should be kept together.

One other point arises here. Where a discretion is given to the commission itself, I should like to know what kind of discretion will be exercised. What is meant by an equitable discretion? How far can the person exercising the discretion go? Should there be a legal floor? Is the legal floor quotient to be 70,000 with a 30 per cent drop or rise? That is the question. How much is to be left to the discretion of the commission? I hope that the commissions will not turn out to be a rubber stamp for other people's work. I hope that, whatever the tolerance be, when a change is made it is made equitably and with proper discretion. I would emphasize that if evidence is prepared for the commission, and I think evidence has to be prepared, it should be made available to anybody who requires it, so that if an objection is made the objector is armed with the same material as the commissioners or the counsel who appears before the commission.

Mr. Harkness: Mr. Chairman, I will take only two or three minutes of the committee's time to make one or two suggestions. The first is in connection with a matter brought forward to some extent a little while ago by the hon. member for Queens, namely that some consideration should be given to the growth which is taking place in certain areas since the last census was taken. By the time the commissions which are appointed report, it will have been at least four years since the last census was taken, and during that period a considerable change in population will have taken place in certain districts. I would