

Government Orders

In my riding of Ahuntsic, the results are positively outlandish. Parishes are being cut in two and communities divided, just to align the riding on the Laurentian Autoroute. For the sake of geographic convenience, part of the northeast corner of Ahuntsic is transferred to another riding. This area, which is isolated from all other areas with the exception of Ahuntsic, has a large Italian community, which in the process would also be isolated from its natural centre, the Italian parish of Notre-Dame-de-Pompéi. This community would no longer enjoy integrated federal representation. Between this area and its new riding lies the vast Miron quarry dump.

Saint-Sulpice, where I live, is faced with a similar situation. The parish is separated from its community organizations, and so forth. Yet, this neighbourhood portion is isolated from its new riding by the Metropolitan Boulevard, a high-technology centre, schools and recreational centres. The government is destroying an integration process that has been patiently developed for the last ten years.

In the proposed project, we find the same lack of logic that appeared in the case of the riding of Laval-des-Rapides, between 1976 and 1989, when it overlapped Laval and Montreal. It had to be seen to be believed!

May I also point out that the numerous divisions of employment centres do not fit electoral boundaries, which undoubtedly contributes to maintaining the confusion among people towards services provided by these centres and by the federal government.

I would also wish to remind you that the very concept of a one-stop window implies harmonization, at all levels of government, of administrative divisions, so that we can provide services and grants from the same social, demographical and economic territories. That is a major demand by the economic and community development co-operatives, the CDEC of Montreal.

We cannot ignore the map of disadvantaged areas that was drawn by the Island of Montreal School Board, major social and economic data. It is more than desirable that Montreal be given, at the federal level, effective electoral representation which takes into account the indicators of disadvantaged areas.

In concluding, I would point out that the criteria for the division of these federal electoral maps have not been reviewed in almost 30 years. These criteria should be developed on the basis of social demographical and social economical data, rather than on the simplistic basis, should I say, of raw and blind mathematical data! On the basis of administrative and/or geographical convenience that has nothing to do with the real areas where people live.

• (1535)

Participating in public hearings on the basis of this redistribution would amount to saying that we view it as an acceptable basis for negotiation while it is not.

Negotiating on an individual basis, county by county, would cause other Montreal ridings to lose their homogeneity.

The overall proposal made by the commission is unacceptable. The parliamentary committee has to start from scratch again. Dealing with the same commission and doing all over again what has already been badly done would only lead to the same results.

The system has to be changed and this is why I will vote for the bill.

[English]

Mr. Julian Reed (Halton—Peel): Mr. Speaker, the riding of Halton—Peel was originally created by a gentleman many of us know: Gerrymander.

One would think with the proposed boundary changes the member would be quite thrilled that a new riding would be created. I believe the new dividing line was created by his brother for it splits a community right in two in a line that is anything but straight. Some of it does not even follow road allowances but travels through the middle of farmers' fields.

It is so ridiculous. Part of the farm on which I live is in the new proposed riding and the other part is in the other. There was immediate response from a returning officer, from a Chamber of Commerce and from a municipality exhorting an appeal of that line.

As a bit of an aside, it is also interesting to note the borders printed on the map in the book the commission released. You will see that the new boundaries are printed upside down on the map. It puts part of the land mass in the southern part of the proposed riding in Lake Ontario. It was cause for some concern. We will have to enroll fish I suppose.

Having said that I was prepared to launch an appeal trying to point out to the commission where changes could be made that might at least improve the situation.

I was very disturbed with the proposal to create new ridings at a time when we consider ourselves to be in a period of extreme restraint. When we want less and less government spending it seems this process is creating more and more.

In my region and others nearby school boards are considering reducing the number of trustees in an effort to save money. The last report I saw was that the region of Durham is proposing to cut five trustees saving \$200,000 through that process. It does not really show a great deal of leadership to advance the cause of increasing the numbers in this House.