

Electoral Boundaries

● (0010)

My closing remark in this debate is that the 130,000 that I represent and the 130,000 that my friend, the hon. member for Dartmouth-Halifax East (Mr. Forrestall), represents, is about 50 per cent more than any other member of this House from the province of Nova Scotia.

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): Mr. Speaker, I join in this debate to lend support to the hon. member for Annapolis Valley (Mr. Nowlan). I share in the observations he made earlier in this debate as well as those made by my colleague, the hon. member for Halifax-East Hants (Mr. McCleave), with respect to certain directions the commission should take if it reconsiders the report which it has presented to us. As the hon. member for Annapolis Valley and the hon. member for Halifax-East Hants have indicated, they put in a lot of effort and gave a lot of thoughtful concern to this. I share in those views and support them.

I support the hon. member for Annapolis Valley because I was born in the Annapolis Valley. It is my home. I was born on the shores of the Annapolis basin. It was truly part, albeit one end, of the Annapolis Valley. I grew up there. I was ousted by the establishment of Cornwallis, the basically Canadian but actually Commonwealth naval training establishment during World War II.

After being ousted from that part of the country because of the full development of the naval training establishment, I went to Middleton, the home town of my grandparents. It was there I went to school and spent my formative years. Therefore, I do have some association with the Annapolis Valley. Indeed it is historic in terms of my father, grandfather, and his parents before him, although there is a little Irish mixed in there somewhere.

The Annapolis Valley has a connotation to Canadians. It has an international reputation. There is a fondness for those of us who from time to time concern ourselves with Canadian history. In the sense of English establishments, it is the oldest part of Canada.

The hon. member for Halifax-East Hants spoke about the contributions and the first development of that area by Samuel de Champlain. However, in terms of the history of the area, we speak about 100 years later than that. Whether it began in the early 1600's or the latter part of that century is not important. What is important is that the land of Évangéline, the Annapolis Valley, connotes something to everyone you talk to, be it in Canada, some other part of North America, South America, Europe, or some other part of the world. It is important historically.

It is incumbent upon us in this era when we so quickly and callously dispose of our symbols that we pause for a minute or two. I commend to the MacDonald commission this very brief sentiment. Perhaps we should once in a while take time to regret this continuous erosion of what may be intangible but nevertheless is very real when trying to find out from whence we came.

I find it very comforting in the city of my colleague and my city, although I have been across the harbour for most of my life, to walk down Spring Garden Road. I stop to look at the old courthouse. When I walk 100 feet to my right I pass the cathedra. This represents something to me.

[Mr. McCleave.]

When I walk another 50 feet and look to my right, I see the residence of the lieutenant governor of Nova Scotia. These are three important referral points.

When I am confused about where we have been and where we are headed, I find it very comforting to look at the law and the interpretation of it, that which guides and protects us. It interprets our work as legislators. That is comforting.

I find it comforting to look at the church. It is part of our heritage. It is comforting to look at the lieutenant government governor's residence. That is as much a part of my heritage as the Annapolis Valley. Hon. members may find it strange that I talk so much about the Annapolis Valley when my constituency is basically in Halifax county. I do so because it is important.

It is important to remember that the number of people we represent is not important. What is important is that we represent communities of interest. It matters not to me whether I represent 125,000, 130,000, 180,000 or 200,000. If that community of interest is common, my job is relatively simple. I could have one more person in my office at \$10,000 or \$15,000 a year. It would have the Chamber and the taxpayers of Canada between \$150,000 and \$200,000 a year.

Numbers are not important. What people require is their day in court. Whether they are right or wrong, they require representation. They need to know that when their member of parliament stands up in this place, most of the time he is representing their point of view. I point that out to Commissioner MacDonald and his fellow commissioners. All these considerations are important.

The number of members in this Chamber should not be increased but we should improve the quality of representation. God knows, my opponent will turn that comment against me and say, "Throw him out, I can do a better job." I am prepared to stand aside, so long as we do not lose sight of that principle which is important.

● (0020)

You see, Mr. Speaker, little girls in Dartmouth-Halifax East do not run around with little boys in Central Nova, because a mountain, woods, wilderness, and an entire way of life separate them. The hon. member for Central Nova (Mr. MacKay) represents his constituents graciously and well. He has already taken over, in my area, all that part from *Ecum Secum* to Mooseland. The culture there is different, their economic background is different, but he has represented them well. Under the commission's proposal he is to take even more of my constituency. I know he will represent his new constituents well. I do not object to that.

Basically my objection is this: the area should not be broken up. The people of the area which it has been my honour to represent in this House for the last several years have always shared a common cultural, economic, and historical background. I plead, as the hon. member for Annapolis Valley (Mr. Nowlan) pleaded: do not break up this constituency. Do not separate it. The hon. member's remarks apply not only to the Annapolis Valley. They apply to my constituency too. It will be important for my grandchildren to know, God willing that I ever have any, and for the people in the rest of the country to know, even