

*Redistribution*

taking up as much time as railways used to take. There are also the problems of the small, independent businessman trying to survive in the cities against the competition caused by mass distribution. These problems will come before this house and we must have members who can speak with knowledge of them and have a personal interest in them. Then there is the problem of recreation. As we crowd more and more people into smaller areas and build more high-rise apartments in which they can live, the provision of more and more recreation will become a problem for the House of Commons in so far as it affects the people of our urban and built-up communities.

Over the last 15 or 20 years we have dealt with the question of housing. Gaps still remain in this legislation, but once again there is an urgent problem in our built-up areas and an urban member should be able to put these matters before the house.

Then we have the human problem. Many hundreds of thousands of people are classified as aged just because they have been superannuated or retired and we are now living in our cities and creating a tremendous reserve of unused human resources. These are the type of problem that must be dealt with, and we must have city members who understand them and can deal with them. In addition to our elderly citizens there are, or course, many classifications of people who are physically handicapped, perhaps from birth, an accident or illness of some kind, and are unable to compete in our labour market.

Many of these urban problems have not been discussed in this house in the past but they are the type of problem that I believe we shall be dealing with more and more in the future. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I speak not only for the province of Saskatchewan and the two major cities of our province but for every city in Canada. I believe we must have someone in parliament who understands these problems, lives, works with and knows the people of the cities and can express their point of view in this house. The city vote—and these remarks refer to any province—should not be submerged or given second rate importance compared with the problems of rural areas around the cities.

I recognize that some cities will have to have an urban and a rural member, but I think that cities must be represented in this house and the right of city dwellers to have their viewpoints expressed should not be taken from them. This is one of the major

objections contained in the Saskatchewan submission to the commission.

I have read a number of the redistribution debates which have taken place in the House of Commons over the last 50 or 60 years. These debates contain a tremendous number of complaints with regard to readjustment of boundaries. If one reads the debate on the last redistribution bill in 1964 he finds that the province which suffered most, Saskatchewan, had the least to say. Ours was the province which had the number of seats reduced to 13 from 17. We did suggest in one or two mild questions to the minister that he might consider doing for us what had been done in 1953 by using the 15 per cent rule. But when no positive reaction came from the government side we in Saskatchewan accepted the democratic rule of representation according to population.

This fact emphasizes that those of us who come from rural areas have no intention of trying to limit in any way whatsoever the right of a person in the city to have fair and proportionate representation in this house. I mark that up on the plus side for those of us who come from the province of Saskatchewan, namely that we accepted this reduction in the number of seats without putting up a tremendous, prolonged objection, which has historically been the case in redistribution debates. This does not mean we were happy about the reduction in seats. On the contrary, we were deeply unhappy. We know that as a province, even though we are small in population, we provide proportionately a tremendous share of the gross national wealth of this country. We should have two or three seats right in the middle of Toronto which are called Saskatchewan seats, because that is where our money ends up.

Having made that point, Mr. Speaker, I repeat that the fundamental position I am taking here is in defence of the right of city people in Saskatchewan to have at least two city ridings and not a combination of rural and rural-urban ridings. That is my first point.

My second point has been made many times in this debate. It is that the commissioners in almost every province used too narrowly the mathematical concept that every city should have approximately the same number of people, regardless of the circumstances, and in too few cases did they follow the wish of parliament that there should be some tolerance in order to meet various conditions. Parliament in its wisdom declared