

*By Hon. Mr. Calder:*

Q. Take your knowledge of the situation in Saskatchewan. Would it be advisable to combine the constituencies at, say, Moosejaw, Maple Creek, and Swift Current, for the purpose of electing three members?—A. I see no reason why it should not be done.

Q. Do you think the candidates could come to a common constituency?—Would they get near the people?—A. It would depend upon the campaign programme—

Q. Do you think the people would have an opportunity of seeing their candidate, and sizing him up, and learning something about his habits, and his character, and his personal qualities?—A. Well, sir, I would think—

Q. Do you think that any election—in any six weeks campaign, that the people would know their candidate?—A. It would be covered as fully as it is under the present system, without the duplication which now goes on.

Hon. Mr. CALDER: He would have to divide himself into three parts, because with a constituency so large he would have to do some hustling.

Mr. DENIS: What about the President of the United States who travels all over the United States? Surely that is larger than any province in Canada, and there are 110,000,000 of people who are all satisfied that they know the President.

Hon. Mr. CALDER: In that case it is certain principles that count. The man represents certain principles.

Mr. DENIS: It would be the same in our elections.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you not think Mr. Calder that if you were running for that constituency to which you refer that you would be fairly well known?

Hon. Mr. CALDER: I might be, because I have been taking part in public life for fifteen years out there. But what about the man who has never been in public life, who gets nominated for the first time, and who lives in a certain locality? That is the usual thing; the other is the unusual thing.

Mr. DENIS: I understand that the elector votes more on principle and on the candidate's policy than for the candidate himself. We know that even in single constituencies, a great number of the electors vote for a man they have never seen before, or assuming that they have seen him once on the hustings making a short speech, and he goes away for the rest of the campaign the electors can appreciate that man, judge of his talents and so on. If that can be done in single constituencies, it surely can be done in several constituencies grouped together, even although they comprise a large area.

Mr. THOMSON: I think there is a good deal in what Mr. Calder has said regarding the necessity of knowing something about the man. I think the more we know about the candidate, the better man we will get. Probably it would not hurt if the present House of Commons had members of a little better calibre than we have, and the only way to get the calibre is to have the people judge of the man as well as of his policy. I believe that under proportional representation we would have very much more of that than at present, and that is one of the reasons why I am strongly in favour of it. I believe we would have it even by the alternative vote in the single constituency. I quite believe that there are many constituencies in this country where it would be impossible to carry out the grouping system satisfactorily. So far as Saskatchewan is concerned there are only one or two places where a group could be formed successfully, perhaps in the south-eastern part of the province, and it is even questionable whether it would be very satisfactory there. But it is a different matter altogether where you can group constituencies.

Hon. Mr. CALDER: I think we are all agreed that there would be difficulty in applying the principle generally. What would you say about this Mr. MacNeil? I understand that in the city of Montreal the question of proportional representation was submitted to the electorate recently for municipal purposes and they voted against it by what majority?

[Mr. C. G. MacNeil.]