

*British North America Act*

of Economics and Political Science, "becalmed in a protest movement". They make noises similar to those of bygone days but their point and purpose is lost.

Certain interesting notions manifested themselves in the redistribution of 1952, such as the notion that the ridings of the party leaders—and this one intrigued me—should be left unhampered. In other words, certain basic principles or governing principles were being laid down then with a series of notable exceptions. I was going to deal with the specifics of this matter in far more detail but owing to the fact that I have been interrupted on such frequent occasions I find that my time is considerably diminished.

However, I will deal just with this basic notion, if you will permit me to do so, Mr. Speaker, of the position of the opposition parties in this parliament. It may be that this parliament will be responsible for redistribution and then again it may not. It is by no means a certainty, as I understand the facts and as I have studied this matter, that redistribution will occur before the next election. This certainly leads me to a side issue, Mr. Speaker, but if you will allow I would say that I do not think an independent body or group can make the specific decisions concerning the riding boundaries in local areas. The problem of defining specific boundaries must be within the control of persons who know more about these matters than anybody else.

This goes along with the notion of the C.C.F. that we should have experts to deal with these things. I do not know about the hon. member who has just taken his seat, but I consider myself as something of an expert on my own riding and I think this is true of every member in every quarter of this house. Who, better than you, is qualified to make political value judgments about boundaries and possible changes in your riding; who, by self-interest, by political education or otherwise, is better qualified for that task? I would remind the hon. member who sponsored this motion and those in his group who are supporting it that this is the essential weakness in handing over, *holus-bolus*, to an independent commission responsibility for specific knowledge of this kind.

I read in Norman Ward's article in the *Journals* of 1953 of the many complex problems which manifested themselves at that time and what occurs to me is that an independent body, agreed to by members of this house, should meet now or very shortly, not to effect redistribution but to lay down certain general principles, acceptable to every member and every group in this house as far as such agreement is possible.

Having agreed upon those principles which affect the limiting of percentages, lost seats in provinces and diminishing representation in relation to the total, and the problems which are obviously going to manifest themselves as mentioned in the Gordon report for example with respect to the 15 metropolitan areas which in 1951 had 5,190,000 inhabitants and which by 1980 will have approximately 12 million inhabitants, these and similar problems should all be considered by such a body. There are statistics and facts available for the use of such a body to enable them to agree on the basic redistribution principles.

Where I part company with my friend in the corner is at this point. I believe that having laid down these principles, having achieved concurrence in this house, then the matter should come before the house with respect to questions of detail. Yes, it is going to be give and take; yes, it is going to be horse trading; yes, it is going to be a lot of things, but I do not think it is going to be dirty or rotten or filthy, and I do not think the ugly side of human nature is going to manifest itself in quite the degree suggested by my hon. friend. We in this house must ultimately be the masters of our own political future, and I would suggest, particularly to my hon. friends in the corner, that they rest easy because if the treatment they receive as a result of re-distribution is consistent with the treatment they receive, have received and will receive from this government—with, mind you, the largest majority in the history of this country—in terms of allotment of speaking time, in terms of committees and the increased powers of committees, then they will come out of redistribution in a far better position than any other opposition group which has ever been represented in this house.

**Mr. Fisher:** May I say, Mr. Speaker that I hope the hon. gentleman who has just sat down does not believe the bill was introduced because we thought we were going to be badly treated.

*(Translation):*

**Mr. Remi Paul (Berthier-Maskinonge-Delaudiere):** Mr. Speaker, if we refer to the B.N.A. Act, we note that the fathers of confederation, in order to ensure a distribution of electoral seats which might really meet the needs of the people, provided under section 8 for a compulsory ten-year census, and under section 51, for a distribution of electoral seats based on such census.