

Redistribution

were faced with these facts. It is true that the county of Huron as a unit would have 49,230 odd people. It is true that the county of Perth as a unit would have about 55,000 or 56,000 people. It is also true that every one in that area subscribes to the views that have been expressed this afternoon by the hon. member for Huron North, that rural ridings should if at all possible be maintained in this house. For that reason the committee, and I should say a majority in the committee, felt that it would be better to retain seats in that area, as was done in 1933, by bolstering—if you will use that phrase. The result is that rather than lose two seats in that area, though it was urged upon us that we should—and I know that would not meet with the wishes of the hon. member for Huron North—it was decided to add to the constituency of Wellington North the area immediately adjacent to the county and which is readily accessible to it. Two townships and the town of Wingham were added to the constituency of Wellington North.

In the course of discussing this matter it should be borne in mind that the constituency of Huron North has at the moment some 26,000 people; that the constituency of Huron-Perth has over 30,000 people; and that while there was no general agreement in the sub-committee as to the minimum number which might be used for a constituency, I personally expressed the view that we ought to try to aim at least at 30,000. For that reason it was natural, I think, that we should try to spread the population around without offending too much the principle of county boundaries, about which I shall say something in a moment, and to bolster constituencies which were low.

The result is that the constituency of Wellington North with the addition which has been made to it from the county of Huron—an addition no greater, I may add, than was made to the county of Huron from the county of Perth 20 years ago—now has a population of 30,300 odd. The constituency of Huron as it is suggested here has a population of 43,000; and the constituency of Wellington South has a population of 43,500. I think that redistribution of the population offends no one in any way but preserves one additional seat from that part of rural Ontario.

On the subject of county boundaries, everyone in Ontario recognizes that as far as possible county boundaries should be observed for reasons with which all Ontario members will agree and which I need not describe. It was for that reason that consideration was given to the report after it had been made, and it was found that we were having the county of Huron put in parts of three ridings.

That is why the chairman of the Ontario sub-committee moved an amendment, or gave notice of it Monday and I think he is going to move it now, making the changes mentioned; so that the county of Bruce will not take part of the county of Huron, and the county of Huron will be comprised in two constituencies, the county of Perth will be comprised in two constituencies, and the county of Wellington will be comprised in two constituencies.

Mr. Murphy: I would like to add a word before this is settled. This particular allocation would also involve ridings to the north, which would be Bruce, Grey North, and Grey-Bruce. There cannot be any question in the mind of anyone as to the sanity of the idea sponsored or proposed by the present member for Huron North. I was a member of the committee and it was suggested earlier, of course by the Liberals on the committee, that three townships should be added to the county of Bruce or to the riding of Bruce and two should go into this small riding of Wellington North which had a population of 24,463.

I still say, Mr. Chairman, that Bruce could have been bolstered without any need to mutilate Huron, by taking some of the adjoining townships of Grey North or Grey-Bruce, which would also leave a county riding immediately to the east. When objection was taken to the idea of these three townships being removed from that part of Bruce, and the two townships going into North Wellington, the Liberal members of the committee insisted that Huron accept the three townships that were already in that riding from the county of Perth. We tried to demonstrate the fairness of the idea of maintaining county boundaries in so far as possible, and in view of what the minister has just said there is only one reason for having mutilated Huron as is being done here.

I am going to be quite frank when I say this. They left the one township of Perth in the riding of Huron for nothing other than political reasons, as has been their purpose all through redistribution. I am satisfied in my own mind that the people in that particular township would have been glad to have the opportunity of associating themselves again with their own native county of Perth. Knowing that they are going to be put in the county of Huron, I expect they will be very happy to be represented by the sitting member for Huron North.

The Chairman: Shall the amendment carry?