

*Redistribution*

**Mr. Drew:**—locally that he had seen a plan and that he was able to inform them therefore what was contemplated in regard to the Carleton constituency. On seeing this I wrote to the Prime Minister, and I think I should place on record the letter I wrote to him:

Ottawa, May 9, 1952

Rt. Hon. Louis S. St. Laurent, Q.C., LL.D., M.P.,  
Prime Minister of Canada,  
East Block,  
Ottawa.

Dear Mr. St. Laurent:

You asked me to inform you of any matter connected with redistribution which I might think should be called to your attention. For that reason I am now placing before you something which could have far-reaching implications.

On more than one occasion Mr. John McDonald, who was a candidate in the Carleton constituency in the last election, has stated publicly that certain townships of Carleton county are to be transferred to adjoining constituencies.

I do not propose to comment at the moment about any proposed dismemberment of historic constituencies for what would appear to be a somewhat obvious purpose. What I am now calling to your attention is the implication which must be drawn from Mr. McDonald's statement if it should prove that what he said is correct.

Members of the redistribution committee have asked the chairman for any tentative plans which may have been drafted as a basis for discussion. They have been informed that none exist. You will realize that far more serious than any question as to whether certain changes should or should not be made is the implication in Mr. McDonald's statement that information which is being denied to members of parliament who have been appointed to the redistribution committee is being handed out to those who have no connection with the committee or with parliament. Mr. McDonald made his statement so definitely that very naturally the matter has been drawn to my attention by members of the committee who are astonished that they should on the one hand be told by the chairman of the committee that no plans exist, while at the same time they read in the press reports of definite statements regarding plans which are said to have been communicated to others than members of parliament.

I trust that you can assure me that Mr. McDonald's statements were made without any authority or foundation in fact, so that I may assure the members of the committee who have brought this to my attention that they are not being asked to sit on a committee for which the decisions have already been made.

I read that now because I was not in that letter discussing the merits or otherwise of any change. But I made it clear that what I was discussing was the suggestion that those not even connected with parliament were in a position to say what was going to be done, and that they had information which was being denied the members of the committee. That was the point I made, and that is a point, I suggest now, which does raise a question in the mind of everyone here.

I would point out that it would have been a very interesting thing if that suggestion had been carried out, because that would have

[Mr. McIlraith.]

meant the joining of two of the rural areas of Carleton with Lanark, providing the breaking up of the constituencies in a way which again would have presented a choice to two Conservative members of the House of Commons as to which one was going to continue to represent the seat.

**Mr. McIlraith:** You represent city people too, do you not?

**Mr. Drew:** It is situations of that kind which do raise the question in our minds and which have prompted the suggestion that even at this stage the whole subject be referred back to the committee on redistribution, with the thought that, as the result of discussions that have taken place here, they might possibly be able to recommend some amendments which would obviate some of the particular criticisms which have been directed to the decisions made.

I most certainly agree that the Prime Minister on that occasion wrote to me indicating that he had passed on my letter for consideration. I raise that now for no reason other than that of supporting my argument that if, as the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration has said, he is prepared to consider individual amendments that might be put forward here, it would be much better if the redistribution committee met as a whole, and that these subjects be discussed with some elasticity and some opportunity for general readjustment, rather than simply dealing with rigid amendments which could only be made to a fixed basic decision that is reached in the house through the discussion of the schedules of the bill. It was with that thought in mind that I made the proposal, and that I do so now, in all seriousness, with a desire to avoid the kind of debate to which the Prime Minister referred.

**Mr. Coldwell:** Mr. Chairman, let me say at once that what I may say now has not been occasioned by anything the Prime Minister has said, or anything said in the house today. When I heard the Minister of Agriculture speak yesterday I was rather surprised to learn that special consideration had been given to the constituency of Rosetown-Biggarr.

I want to say now, and I hope all members will take notice, that even to members of my own party, at no time did I make any suggestion that any special consideration should be given to my constituency. Let me put on record what the Minister of Agriculture said yesterday. These are his words as they appear at pages 4042 and 4043 of *Hansard*:

The hon. member for Rosetown-Biggarr says that if the matter had been referred to a commission there would have been quite a different map. I