

Redistribution

● (1750)

It is grossly unfair for any commissioner or system to consider only people and not where they live. Representation by population in the future must take into account where people live. Over a period of approximately 10 years, our southern boundary has changed by approximately 30 miles and our western boundary by approximately 60 miles. A portion of the area which used to be in the western part of the constituency of Red Deer is now represented by the hon. member for Rocky Mountain (Mr. Clark). Under the proposed new boundaries it will again be part of the constituency of Red Deer. This has a diverse effect on the people of that area. They become not only accustomed to that area but acquainted with those who represent them. When boundaries are changed it disrupts these people tremendously. I am sure this is never considered by the commissioners.

Any mathematician can devise boundaries, if numbers are all you are going to consider. This is one consideration which must be taken into account in the future. Perhaps legislation will have to be changed, but those responsible must devise new ways and means of representation.

Another aspect of the system that is at fault is the fact that commissioners seldom consider the wishes and desires of the people. I am sure the people would appreciate greater consideration being given to them. Apparently no thought is given to the wishes of municipalities. Counties are divided with the greatest portion in one constituency and a small part in the other. This means that Reeves or secretaries of counties or municipalities have to communicate with two and sometimes three federal members of parliament. This not only creates a problem but is not conducive to consistency.

When drawing the borders of a constituency, there is too much reliance on statisticians and mathematicians. Rivers are not taken into account. If bridges are not nearby, the people are segregated. These factors must be considered in the future. I live practically in the middle of my constituency. I have to travel 65 miles to one end of my constituency and 45 to the other, and this involves considerable travel. Rivers isolate people. There are certain areas to which people travel, not only for their business but socially. This is seldom taken into account.

Telephonic communication presents considerable problems when it is necessary to go through many exchanges to communicate with constituents. A representative in an urban area can perhaps contact all his people on one exchange. However, a rural representative may have to go through 19 or 20 exchanges. This constitutes a great problem. When commissioners are selected by the government in the future, they should be instructed to consider all these aspects when setting up new boundaries for future electoral divisions.

Mr. Stan Schumacher (Palliser): Mr. Speaker, I notice it is almost six o'clock, but perhaps I can say a few words with regard to what has been proposed by the boundaries commission of the province of Alberta.

I must say at the outset they have done a totally inadequate and inappropriate job of dividing the province into electoral divisions. The job that was done in 1966 or 1967 was not much better. This House should not take much

[Mr. Towers.]

pride in the legislation that set up these commissions. As far as I can judge, the redistribution that was done previous to this by the members of this House was much better and longer lasting. If the minor alterations that were necessary in 1966 had been made, we would have had much better results this time. Because everything was botched up in 1966 and we are still operating under the same ground rules, we still have a bad job.

I notice it is six o'clock. Perhaps I will have an opportunity to continue these remarks later.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): The further consideration of the objection to the report of the electoral boundaries commission for the Province of Alberta 1973 stands deferred. It being six o'clock, I do now leave the chair until eight o'clock.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

Mr. Ovide Laflamme (Montmorency): Mr. Speaker, may I have unanimous permission to revert to motions for the purpose of tabling the report of the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections?

Mr. Speaker: Is this agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS

First report of Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections—Mr. Laflamme.

[Editor's Note: For text of above report, see today's Votes and Proceedings]

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

ELECTION EXPENSES**PROVISION OF PAYMENTS TO CANDIDATES AND REIMBURSEMENT OF PARTIES FOR CERTAIN BROADCASTING TIME**

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. MacEachen that Bill C-203, to amend the Canada Elections