

Redistribution

Bay area. This riding was changed. I submit this was an excellent idea. I have not gone into all the figures. However, I am sure some of these constituencies need changing. There is a need for alteration. These boundaries should be made as permanent as possible by taking account of all the relevant trends. Here is a growing area, an area which will contain 70,000 people. Why change it? Why not leave it as it is? If any adjustments need to be made, advantages could be taken of the areas to the north, to the south and to the southeast.

I hope the commission will reconsider their proposals before they commit themselves to a course of action which would in my opinion be mistaken. The constituency would cover around 2,000 square miles and I submit it is hardly fair to expect a member of parliament to give adequate representation to an area with so many community centres and such a large and diversified occupational population.

Hon. J. J. Greene (Minister of Agriculture): I should like to make a few brief remarks with regard to this report. I thank hon. members for giving their consent in this respect. The reason many of us were not present yesterday was because the time of the discussion had been changed; it was originally to have taken place today.

In making these representations I am one who cannot be accused of any political partisanship inasmuch as the representations I intend to make concern a portion of my present constituency which is now destined to be broken into two parts and transferred to two other constituencies and which, I believe, should be placed in a third constituency which is not the one in which I am presently located. So any representations I make in this regard can be of no possible benefit to me politically. Nevertheless, I feel representations should be made, since I hold the view that the present boundaries as defined by the commission can only lead to inadequate representation of the people concerned.

I may say that in this regard the hon. member for Carleton (Mr. Bell) and I appeared before the commission and put forward very much the same type of representations with regard to these ridings in eastern Ontario as I am putting forward now. I agreed wholeheartedly with the representations the hon. member for Carleton made at that time and again I concur in his representations in the present debate as far as they involve the approach of the commission to the delineation of the eastern Ontario ridings.

[Mr. Rynard.]

May I point out, as I think has been done by other speakers, without in any way impugning either the integrity or the ability of the commissioners, that here we have a classic example of the dangers of relegating to administrative bodies functions which ultimately relate to the elected representatives of the people. There has been a great tendency in the past few years to give powers to administrative bodies and to remove them from elected bodies. I always think this is strange inasmuch as in the first instance the people themselves achieve power and freedom by taking it away from the executive arm and giving it to their elected representatives. In the past few years we have been reversing this trend and telling ourselves: Anything we can take away from our elected representatives and give to administrative bodies will constitute an improvement.

Here we have a clear example of the danger of doing this type of thing. All of us who are elected representatives of the people, should take cognizance of this flagrant example of what happens when responsibility is taken from elected bodies and given to boards and tribunals. In my humble opinion no elected body of men sitting in this house or anywhere else could possibly have made a redistribution on this basis or could possibly have made a worse redistribution than has been done in this case. Yet there still seems to be some sanctity about giving the job to an administrative board or commission rather than to a committee of this house.

• (5:20 p.m.)

If a committee of this house had made a redistribution in this fashion without in any way considering the social, economic and political habits and mores of the people—if an elected body said, "You will vote wherever we say you are going to vote. It does not matter what you are used to, or what you like, or what would be more convenient for you. We do not care about that. You will vote where we say you will, irrespective of your convenience"—if any elected body of persons had done that they would be called to account very quickly at the next election by the people whom they so treated.

But here we find this body is not responsible to the people. They can make decisions of this kind and have apparently to account to no one for such decisions. Apparently they have complete security of office. They are not too concerned with the effect on the people whom they are putting into these unaccustomed areas.