

*Redistribution*

say on that point, and I go on to say this: When the house decided last Saturday to proceed without having a redistribution commission for this session at least, it had reference to this particular redistribution.

At the moment I am not going to debate the details of this bill. Complaints have been made about it, and they have been answered most effectively by the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Resources and Development and other hon. members. But bear in mind that there are a great many members who would like to speak on this bill when the schedule is reached having to do with particular constituencies. It will take some time, I understand, to have that discussion. It is therefore the hope of the government that this bill may be proceeded with, to the schedule, at which point we can have specific discussion on specific items.

The leader of the opposition, closing his remarks last night, suggested that we should look at what the Prime Minister had said and, as he put it, see how far we had departed from the course he had outlined. May I read at this time that part of the Prime Minister's observations to which he was referring, although he did not indicate it specifically, as they are reported at page 1419 of *Hansard* when he was introducing the motion to set up a redistribution committee. At that time he said:

This motion is being submitted to the house in furtherance of the statement I made on March 10 about redistribution. I stated at that time that it was at least my view that this matter of redistribution, the matter of the readjustment of representation in the House of Commons, was not a responsibility of the executive branch of our constitutional set-up but that it was a responsibility placed by the constitution on parliament, generally. I pointed out that it had always been the custom for the leader of the majority group in the house to provide an opportunity for members to discharge that responsibility, by submitting a bill for consideration by the house and which was drawn in accordance with the rules then applicable to the matter of readjustment and which, after it had received second reading, was referred to a committee composed of members of all the groups in the house, to determine the schedules that would describe the territorial divisions entitled to return members to parliament.

Now, that is precisely what is being done. We have before us a report of a committee appointed to prepare schedules. It is not the function of the executive of government to draw that bill—at least it has not been since a Liberal government in 1903 changed the procedure which had applied up to that time. Since that time we have always followed the procedure of referring a bill to a committee, and then discussing the report of the committee. The government recognizes that the bill may have imperfections in the eyes of hon. members, and for that very purpose it

[Mr. Harris (Grey-Bruce).]

is brought here to the committee where no doubt amendments will be offered. If those amendments commend themselves to the majority of the committee, I have no doubt they will be carried. The place to deal with these matters is on the appropriate schedule by debate and by the decision of parliament, as indicated by the Prime Minister.

**Mr. Drew:** Mr. Chairman, it is clear that the minister who has just spoken has misapprehended completely the reference to the Prime Minister's statement and the effect of that statement upon the procedure that has been followed. When I suggested yesterday that the government should examine the statement of the Prime Minister I was referring to the statement to which the minister has just referred. What the Prime Minister said was that it was not the responsibility of the executive branch of government to decide what will be done but rather that it is the responsibility of parliament generally. We had a perfectly clear explanation yesterday which by no possible chance could be misunderstood, that Liberal caucuses in the provinces had instructed their representatives what must be done. The word "must" was the word employed in the explanation given to us yesterday.

That is not leaving the responsibility to parliament generally. What I was suggesting in my remarks last night, as on earlier occasions, was that the government let the committee approach this problem in a way that would recognize the very principle that the Prime Minister laid down, that is, that it is the responsibility of parliament generally. What has happened is that the committee has been told what is to be done. There has been a certain discussion back and forth and in certain cases some arguments have undoubtedly received some response, but no doubt was left by the explanations that were given yesterday at the ministerial level as to the extent to which direction had gone to members of the committee.

**Mr. Gardiner:** Nothing to do with what we are talking about.

**Mr. Drew:** It has everything to do with what I am talking about.

**An hon. Member:** What is he talking about?

**Mr. Drew:** The minister who has just spoken has said that that is precisely what is being done after having quoted the words of the Prime Minister. That is precisely what is not being done. Not only has the executive branch, but that segment of parliament represented by the party in power—we are told so frequently by the members