

Electoral Boundaries

a bit. I doubt whether even in the new and enlarged riding of Timiskaming it would be much over 550 miles from the southern end to Moosonee and James Bay. He did not mention that he was being given a very choice part of the territorial district of Nipissing, the part that was in Renfrew North. That is the part which is very close to my own riding and which is actually oriented to the riding of Parry Sound, the township of Chisolm, which is now to be part of the new riding of Timiskaming.

● (2020)

The idea of moving down from 12 to 11 seats does not sit too well with us, Mr. Speaker. I consider myself a northerner. Half my riding is a territorial district. Territorial districts are for the most part in northern Ontario, with the exception of Parry Sound. The southern portion of my riding is the regional municipality of Muskoka. Representing a territorial district I have every sympathy with northern Ontario members and I hope the boundaries commission will see fit to let northern Ontario retain its 12 seats. As matters stand, Ontario will end up with seven extra seats. This great Toronto horseshoe will be getting eight seats and the rest of Ontario is getting no increase. One particular area, northern Ontario, is losing a seat.

As the hon. member for Nipissing so rightly pointed out, there is a great trend toward urbanization. He stated that by the year 2000 94 per cent of the people of Canada will be residing in 12 congested urban areas. Let us hope something will be done to keep more people in rural areas where they will be happier, healthier, and live a lot longer. Although they will probably not make so much salary, they will live a better rounded life.

I see the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie (Mr. Symes) getting ready in anticipation of speaking. Having checked the boundaries of his riding I see the commissioners have done a slicing job and removed part of the city of Sault Ste. Marie and placed it in the riding of Algoma. I am sure the hon. member is not too elated with that. The city of Sault Ste. Marie is, I was going to say an island unto itself, but it is at least an entity. It is a community. The ten or eleven thousand people who are being cut away from the city so far as the federal riding is concerned are very unhappy about it, and I am sure he will be speaking most eloquently on behalf of his riding. As I mentioned to him, he has not been the only one to speak in support; the hon. member for Lanark-Renfrew-Carleton (Mr. Dick) spoke on the matter and read into the record a letter from the Ontario minister of housing.

Hon. Judd Buchanan (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, my comments will be brief. The purpose of this intervention, which has already been outlined to the Electoral Boundaries Commission on maps, is not to take issue with the proposed revisions of population distribution between the ridings of London East and London West. Rather it is to propose a simpler and less disruptive boundary between these two ridings while maintaining the same population distribution as proposed by the federal boundaries commission. It seems to me that one of the criteria which common sense would dictate should play a part in the considerations of the commissioners is that of minimizing the disruption of existing ridings.

[Mr. Darling.]

After the election of 1968, the first in the newly created ridings of London East and London West which resulted from redistribution, considerable confusion existed in the minds of residents as to which riding they lived in, and this was evidenced by the substantial amount of misdirected mail and telephone calls which both members received. This has now diminished to the point where, eight years later, it is safe to say that 95 per cent of the constituents know in which constituency they live. While accepting that some disruption is necessary with redistribution, it is suggested that new boundaries should keep disruption to the absolute minimum.

The proposal I am advancing has absolutely no bearing on any boundary of these ridings except the joint boundary, the common north-south boundary, between London East and London West. In the commissioners' proposal, in the northern section of the riding they carved out a much larger chunk of London West than was necessary. Then in order to compensate for this excessive carving in the northern portion of the riding, they had to carve an equally large chunk out of London East in the Southern section.

I believe that the boundary which would be achieved by a much smaller adjustment in the northern section of the riding would be considerably fairer and more reasonable from the point of view of the residents of both these ridings. It is a simpler boundary since it follows well-known thoroughfares, makes use of well-known streets, and will be much clearer for the residents to understand than will watercourses, less well-known streets, or relatively unknown railroad tracks.

Now I make a political comment, Mr. Speaker. Both ridings were won by the same party in the last election by substantial margins, and I think the fact that both sitting members support the proposed revision that I am advancing is a clear indication that it is felt that there is virtually no political advantage to be gained from either set of redistributed boundaries.

We believe, and I propose to the House, that one of the criteria that should be urged upon the commissioners is the minimizing of disruption for existing constituents. It seems to me that the disruption should be minimized to the greatest extent possible, consistent with the achieving of a proper distribution balance between the existing ridings.

I would therefore urge upon the commissioners of the federal boundaries commission that they re-examine their proposed boundary between the ridings of London East and London West and alter it so as to minimize the disruption they are imposing upon the residents of both ridings, and achieve their desired population distribution by substantially moving back the boundary in the northerly section of the riding, keeping the existing boundary between the two ridings in the southerly portion of the riding.

[Translation]

Mr. Loiselle (Chambly): I rise on a point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): The hon. member for Chambly (Mr. Loiselle) is rising on a point of order.

● (2030)

Mr. Loiselle (Chambly): Mr. Speaker, since I shall be unable to attend the sitting of the House tomorrow and I