

*Electoral Boundaries Commission*

ever introduced into parliament, that it would take some considerable time for it to pass, and that even if the election were not held until 1963 it would be easy to have sufficient delay so the redistribution could not be completed during the life of this parliament. I do not think that prediction will prove to have been wrong.

Of course there are circumstances in which an election would be justified after a census without a redistribution, if there were some critical situation, if the government lost the confidence of the house and wished to test the confidence of the country, if there were some great emergency of some kind and there was some doubt in the government's mind about whether or not it had the support of the country; but in times which we are told are tranquil, when we are told everything is going so well in the country, and when the government still has what appears to be a rather large majority, there seems to be no valid reason for the government not having taken every precaution in good time to ensure that this constitutional obligation would be carried out as the fathers of confederation intended it to be carried out. And that, sir, has not been done.

**The Chairman:** Order. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but his time has now expired.

**Mr. Chevrier:** Carry on.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** I shall have an opportunity to speak later.

**Mr. Fisher:** Mr. Chairman, I would agree to the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate carrying on, but I think he intends to do so later in any event.

Any pleasure we may have experienced at the introduction of this resolution is tempered by disappointment arising from its lateness and the realization that an injustice, although it may be an abstract one, is going to be done to a great many voters in Canada because the commission has not been made effective at an earlier date, and because we will not have a redistribution, apparently, before the election.

The remarks of the Prime Minister last evening were quite disappointing to me as one who for several sessions has introduced a measure that had the same intent as this, although as a private member I was limited in the extent to which I could spell out the intention. My disappointment stems from the very apparent fact that the Prime Minister has not fully thought out the kind of instruction that ought to be given to the electoral commission that draws up the boundaries and this, it seems to me, is one of the key

points. What is the use of making the general statement that representation by population is not to be the over-all principle, that some account must be taken of traditional boundaries and so on, without some indication as to the—

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** I do not want to interrupt the hon. gentleman but that is the reason I suggested last night that it would be helpful to pass the resolution so that we could have the bill before us. I cannot go into detail, as the hon. member knows, but the bill has in it directions and guides for the commission. If we could hasten the passing of the resolution to the bill would be before the house, the fullest consideration could then be given to the bill. I do not wish to interrupt the hon. member except for the purpose of making that very clear.

**Mr. Fisher:** Mr. Chairman, I suppose I should have got in touch with Jackson of the *Journal*; maybe I could have found out something about the situation and what is planned. It does seem to me there is no point in going ahead with a commission unless full guiding lines are to be laid down as to how it is to operate in this regard. I will apologize to the Prime Minister if it is later revealed that I have done him an injustice, but I thought he was very indefinite on that particular score.

There is another point he did not touch on at all that I thought he would almost be forced to deal with. The fact is that at least in the province of Quebec there is a very strong body of opinion that has had its voice in this house during this parliament and also found a voice in the Tremblay report several years ago. That body of opinion has indicated that the whole question of representation in the federal parliament by its very nature, as intended by the fathers of confederation, was meant to be on the basis of provincial representatives within the federal chamber rather than national representatives from particular areas of Canada.

I disagree with this point of view, but it has immense consequences if it is going to be accepted. Though it is a delicate matter, it seems to me it is one that needs to be faced because in my view the Canadian parliament at any time has to be completely in charge of the whole conception. I would point out to the Prime Minister and to other hon. members that because of the Senate floor that now keeps Prince Edward Island at four seats, New Brunswick at ten, Newfoundland at seven and will probably keep Nova Scotia at ten for the next one or two redistributions, these provinces are now guaranteed a representation which it seems to me lends some support or even some sovereignty to the idea