

● (Midnight)

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Order, please. It appears that there is no more debate on the objections to the Report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission for the province of Quebec. The House having heard these objections, it is my duty, pursuant to section 20 of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act, to refer the Report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission, together with copies of objections, and also a copy of the *Debates of the House of Commons* back to the commission for reconsideration thereof.

The House will now resume consideration of the objections to the Report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission for the province of Nova Scotia.

OBJECTIONS TO COMMISSION REPORT RESPECTING NOVA SCOTIA

Mr. Robert McCleave (Halifax-East Hants): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to take part in what I call the Macbeth debate. Macbeth, as we know from reading the great play, murdered sleep.

Before I finish my remarks regarding Nova Scotia, and I will finish them very, very quickly, if I could be allowed to be out of order for about a minute—and I would not have been if I had taken part in the debate which preceded with regard to either Ontario or Quebec—I should like to say that I think the hon. members from northern Ontario really made a case to have that extra seat back. The hon. members from northern Quebec made a pretty good case as well. When there are wide open areas, there should be more generosity with regard to the number of voting bodies which have to be found in them.

When I was speaking previously in this particular debate, I said that the MacDonald electoral commission in Nova Scotia had done what I considered to be a good job, but I added, perhaps from an excess of verbosity, that I thought it had blundered in one area, and that is the area of western Nova Scotia. Actually, it was the Samuel de Champlain area before he moved on to lesser green pastures in *La Belle Province*, but Samuel de Champlain and his group originally settled on the shores of the Annapolis basin. It is on those shores that the only real dispute exists with regard to the Nova Scotia ridings today. It is a touchy situation, and probably is not helped very much by the remarks of the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Richardson) in this House earlier today, or by his remarks on a previous occasion. However, I do not intend to get into that sort of situation. What I really want to do, in backing up the argument of the hon. member for Annapolis Valley (Mr. Nowlan) that the electoral commission take another look at its work, is to suggest a place where there might be a remedy.

One thing which has impressed me about the debate so far has been that the members have been trying to help the electoral commission solve the problems, that is, that there were not just complaints, but there were the best suggestions hon. members could come up with as to how the commission might proceed to redesign boundaries. It is in that spirit that I take part in this debate.

Electoral Boundaries

I used the word "blunder" with regard to the divisions in western Nova Scotia; nobody asked me to, but I should like to withdraw that word. I think I was excessively verbose when I used it. Perhaps I was carried away by my own speech, and I did an injustice to people who have worked very hard and who have tried to make sense out of the decision which always takes place when seats have to be divided up in any province. Everyone in the House at least should be thankful that the commissioners have been given the job and that members of parliament no longer have to fall upon each other like cannibals, as happened in the old days when members of parliament themselves carried out redistribution rather than an independent commission.

When I was concluding my remarks the other day I suggested that if the commission were to look around for areas which could fit into different ridings, it should start at the hub of Nova Scotia, the Mount Uniacke area. I believe it is now the fastest growing area in Nova Scotia. The hon. member for Dartmouth-Halifax East (Mr. Forrester) may quarrel with that, but I believe Mount Uniacke is growing faster than Shubenacadie and Bedford, Shubenacadie being in my present constituency and Bedford being in the constituency of the hon. member for Dartmouth-Halifax East. He may have a faster growing area in Cole Harbour. In any event, it seems to me that if the commission were to listen to our plea, it might very well take a look at the Mount Uniacke area as something which could either fit into the valley riding—that is assuming that the valley was to lose its East Hants portion—or it could still retain the Mount Uniacke portion which would represent a fair population.

Mount Uniacke could also fit into the western Halifax seat, so if the commission is going to make changes, that is an area where a very viable area can be placed into either one of two particular ridings. As far as the valley riding losing the East Hants portion or the rest of the East Hants portion of Mount Uniacke is concerned, East Hants is more Truro orientated or more Windsor orientated, so it could go in with a riding which has either one of those towns within it. It would be more especially Truro orientated if the Shubenacadie river crossing, for which I have argued all the time I have represented East Hants in this House, were ever to be built. It seems to have fallen the victim of restraint in Nova Scotia these days, and I will be saying something about that in another debate in a few days time. However, I point out that East Hants can go either way, into a valley riding or into a Truro riding. This also gives a little bit of flexibility.

It has been my privilege in this parliament to have represented 130,000 or more people, the largest number in Atlantic Canada, with the hon. member for Dartmouth-Halifax East hot on my trail a few hundred behind. The reason is that between the two of us we represent the growth areas of Nova Scotia, and areas that are going to continue to grow. The commission might bear this in mind. The census upon which this boundary division is taking place will be tens of thousands below what is going to exist in both of those suburban areas of Halifax and Dartmouth in even a few years time. They might very well take this into consideration if they should decide to readjust the seats.