

representation of a province which doubles its population should stand still at 23 seats between 1961 and 1975.

**An hon. Member:** It is slowing down.

**Mr. Reynolds:** British Columbia will never slow down, no matter what the government happens to be. This bill will get my support now on second reading, but it will not receive my support on third reading unless a formula is worked out between the whips or the House leaders by which British Columbia will receive its three seats before the next election. If the rest of the provinces wish to review the situation so that they do not lose seats, that is fine with us, but I cannot see British Columbia going right through until 1975 and missing those three seats.

People to whom I have spoken in British Columbia will be very happy to see redistribution take place and there is no reason why it cannot take place right away, even if we are the only province affected, in which case we would not be short of those seats. I shall propose such an arrangement in committee and make this point later during third reading. That is all I wish to say. I could say a good deal more about the maps, and so on, but I think we ought to get on with this business.

**Mr. Harry Kuntz (Battle River):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to enter this debate and go on record as being fully in support of Bill C-208. Why do I support the bill? Because, along with many other members in the House, I believe the time has come for a complete review of every aspect of the guidelines and laws which have governed the setting of the federal electoral boundaries across Canada in the past. What better time could we pick than the 18 months which this bill will provide?

I firmly believe that although the rules governing redistribution in the past were adequate, they have now become obsolete and outdated. There is an old saying which goes like this: You are not making progress unless you are willing to give up a good idea in favour of a better one. In the case of electoral boundaries, there has to be a solution which is acceptable to all regions of Canada. The only way to find the solution is to have the subject turned over to a committee for in-depth study. The committee must be formed of people who have complete comprehension of all the problems involved.

Mr. Speaker, most hon. members can quote numerous examples of committees being composed of people who were not familiar with the subjects being dealt with. Of course, the results were appalling. A prime example was the Electoral Boundaries Commission of the province of Alberta. In that province the agricultural industry is the backbone of our economy, yet not one member of the commission was remotely associated with the agricultural industry. This must not happen if and when a committee is established to study the issue of electoral boundaries. The people named to such a committee must have complete comprehension of the subject as it affects all regions.

There are, no doubt, members in this House who feel that the proposed electoral boundaries are just fine and should be implemented as suggested. I do not agree. One has only to consider the situation in one region, the Northwest Territories. This vast area, with all the potential resources it holds, is destined to become increasingly

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important to every citizen of Canada. To ask, or as far as I am concerned to allow one member to represent this vast and vitally important region is not acceptable. In my view, the same considerations apply to the Yukon.

Alberta is basically an agriculture-related area. In other words, we produce food. I need not tell hon. members about the world food shortage we already face. However, I should like to bring to their attention the shortage we shall be facing in the future. The present world population of 3.74 billion will increase to more than six billion in the next 27 years. Imagine the world food shortage we shall be confronted with then! I predict that in the not-too-distant future agriculture will become the most important industry in the world.

● (1710)

People can get by without a lot of other commodities and make do one way or another, but food is vital. Yet in the new proposed electoral boundaries for Alberta the commission has completely wiped out three rural constituencies and placed them in the two largest cities, Edmonton and Calgary, thereby reducing the voice of agriculture in this House by another three members. To me this is completely ignoring the agricultural industry and the vital role it will be required to play in the future. This role is a fact that none of us can ignore, and those who choose to ignore agriculture—I direct this remark mostly to the younger members—will pay a very heavy price in the future. It is of the utmost importance that the rural and, therefore, agricultural areas have a strong voice in this House as every citizen of Canada has a stake in agriculture.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question?

**Some hon. Members:** Question.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The question is on the motion of Mr. MacEachen that Bill C-208 be now read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the said motion?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**An hon. Member:** On division.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Carried on division.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Six o'clock.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The suggestion is that the Chair call it six o'clock. Is that agreed?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** It being approximately six o'clock, I do now leave the chair.

At 5.13 p.m. the House took recess.