

mons. As we all know, the original bill has been changed. Compromises have been reached between the different parties, and there is now general agreement. This, I am sure, is a great accomplishment in respect of a measure of this kind. It was brought about by the determination on the part of all members of the House of Commons to produce as far as possible a redistribution bill that was as fair and nonpolitical as possible.

We shall have to wait, of course, to see how this legislation works out in practice, but the least we can say about it at present is that it makes a splendid start.

I congratulate Senator Power on his explanation of this bill. I know of no one better versed in matters of this kind. He has had the practical experience of running in more elections than anyone else in Parliament at the present time.

Hon. Mr. Connolly (Ottawa West): And, successfully.

Hon. Mr. Brooks: Yes, he has been very successful. He saw that there was proper distribution.

I remember when, in 1952, he had much to do with piloting the redistribution bill of that time through the House of Commons, and I was interested enough to look up the speech he made on March 13, 1952. At page 421 of the *Debates of the House of Commons* of that year he is reported as saying:

... the suspicion exists in the public mind that those redistributions (in the past) had for their primary motive political advantage or personal political interests.

That is exactly what this bill is designed to prevent.

It seems to me that the time has now come when the members of this house should endeavour to dissipate that suspicion that exists in the minds of the public.

I do not think the act passed in 1952 successfully achieved that purpose.

I found it very interesting to read on in Senator Power's speech of that time. On the same page I find these words:

As my friends and associates from Quebec know well—

And I include those from other parts of Canada as well.

—I have never been a white-plumed Sir Galahad constantly seeking the Holy Grail of electoral purity.

That is very beautiful language, and it is also true.

Hon. Mr. Powers: Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Brooks: I should like to give honourable senators a short history of this bill. At the outset I point out that there is

no senator on this side of the house who opposes it. It is well known that Canada's Constitution states that after each national census representation in the House of Commons must be adjusted to compensate for shifts in the population, but this has not always, if ever, been done. The last census was taken in 1961. Thus, approximately three years have passed before Parliament is asked to give authority for the drawing up of new constituency boundaries. In the meantime we have had two federal elections based on the old distribution, and some even say that we may have a third before the electoral boundaries are readjusted.

In 1962 the previous Government introduced a redistribution bill, but that was withdrawn because the census figures were not available until June of 1962 and, as we know, there was a general election on June 10. The same Government introduced the bill again in 1963, but the general election of 1963 prevented new legislation. It was late in 1963 that the present Government introduced a redistribution bill, but that session ended without any action upon it. In March of 1964 the bill was introduced again, and debated for three days, but was then withdrawn by the Government until April. When the Prime Minister drew up his list of legislation having priority before the beginning of the flag debate, consideration of this bill was omitted. I might say that this surprised many members of Parliament and also the public in general, because this legislation was very important and urgent, and it was felt that it should have been dealt with at that time.

In April the bill was discussed for five or six days, and then we heard about it briefly again in September and October. The House of Commons began its consideration of it in earnest on November 10, and it is now before this house. Only after these weeks and months of procrastination are we finally considering it.

Some particular points in this bill have already been mentioned. The constituencies as drawn up after the 1951 census heavily favoured the rural vote. The honourable sponsor of the bill (Hon. Mr. Power) has pointed out that there were not only discrepancies between the rural and urban centres as such, but there were discrepancies—although I imagine comparatively few—in the urban constituencies as well. We all know that since the Second World War there has been a tremendous growth in the urban centres of this country. The population of cities such as Montreal, Toronto, Hamilton, Calgary and Vancouver has increased to a great extent. Many immigrants have come to this country since that time, most of whom have gone to the cities, and people who were