

the member. He must represent the views of the people in terms of those who live in the cities and those who live in the rural areas.

Most of us in Saskatchewan are adaptable and we are prepared to tackle this kind of problem, but if we continue along these lines the province of Saskatchewan could have its membership reduced to six. That is why there should be a review, rather than for the reasons advanced by the hon. member for Crowfoot, even though I am inclined to agree with some of them. We in Saskatchewan face the very definite possibility of having the number of representatives reduced to six.

**Mr. Horner (Crowfoot):** If you continue to have a socialist government there, you will.

**Mr. Knight:** This is a definite possibility, while at the same time the province of New Brunswick will be allowed to maintain its number of representatives at ten regardless of size of population. That is an extremely serious problem in terms of representation as enunciated by the British North America Act, and that is why I believe this review ought to take place. In addition, I believe the review ought to take place in a minority parliament rather than a parliament of majorities where one political party can hold the club in respect of the whole matter.

There have been arguments put forward by one of my colleagues from Saskatchewan. He said he was completely satisfied with the redistribution boundaries in the province of Saskatchewan. That is his right and prerogative. But during his argument he stated we were casting aside the work of the boundaries commissions across the country. To my mind that is an improper argument on this issue. We are not casting this work aside; we are suspending it for 18 months during which time we hope to reconcile our differences and develop a policy that is acceptable. Perhaps this will increase the number of members to something similar to the limitations in respect of the number of senators from each province. If we cannot answer these fundamental questions, then redistribution does in fact take place, regardless of what has been suggested by my colleague. He and I have had this debate in the corridor already, but I thought I should enunciate my feelings again.

I was amazed at the logic of some of the arguments of the hon. member for Peel South. He happens to be a Tory sitting close to me, but in terms of ideology he sits far away. After what I thought was an attack on the rural areas in relation to some mischievous plot that it taking place, pitting rural members against urban members, he went on to explain that Prince Edward Island should have six seats and that his urban area should have two representatives instead of one as at the present time. He then went on to say that with the recent growth rate, assuming this country would continue to grow at the same rate and that we would have the same number of constituencies, 264, based on the 1981 census Peel South would be entitled to four representatives.

The hon. member failed to point out that should the province of Prince Edward Island continue to lose population at the present rate—and I hope that does not happen—and fall below what is required for four constituencies, it would continue to have this number of members

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regardless of population. He strenuously defended that position. Even if there was a loss in population, Prince Edward Island would be guaranteed that representation by the British North America Act. In this event, the people of Prince Edward Island would still have as much or greater representation than the increased representation the hon. member was suggesting for Peel South. The hon. member did not see in that situation a case for parliament reviewing the question of redistribution of representation by population, and for that reason I do not know why he opposes this measure.

Under this legislation we would in fact re-examine this very fundamental question in 18 months. We would not be re-examining the question of having independent boundaries commissions, which I think is a principle from which we should not wander. We would be re-examining the number of representatives in this House of Commons along with the ingredients that go into this whole matter of redistribution. We could examine the possibility of increasing the number of members in this House to avoid loss of representation in the provinces. We could go into many other matters at the same time. I think we should set ourselves that kind of job.

There is tremendous psychological reaction in many areas of this country which is difficult to explain to a member coming from a large urban area. There is psychological reaction in a rural area which has seen over the decades loss of population and loss of membership in this House of Commons. You can imagine the tremendous psychological effect of seeing 21 seats cut to 17, 17 to 13, 13 to 12 and then, as suggested to 11, 10, 9 or something of that order. I understand it would stop at ten in the province of Saskatchewan.

People would not react as strongly if they understood that even with the population growth there would be a limit on the increase in the number of members and they would stay at a certain level. But that does not take place under this legislation because we stay at a fixed number. If we stayed within the 25 per cent up or down adjustment rate, I think this would be a liberal approach to redistribution.

If we could redistribute in terms of considering the number of people it would be practical for an hon. member to properly represent, whether it be in an urban or a rural area, assuming that Canada's population continues growing, then consideration could be given not only to the rural members but to the urban members. If we keep the number of members at 264, assuming Canada's population continues to grow, then we must ask ourselves in respect of urban and rural centres how many people an hon. member should try to represent. I believe that a member, whether he lives in Peel South or Assiniboia, should not be asked to represent more than 30,000 or 35,000 voters. That would bring about an increase in the number of representatives.

● (1610)

What causes me concern is that after we drew up the British North America Act there were two systems of representation within parliament. One body was elected and the other was appointed. "The other," if I may remind members of the House, is the Senate. We do not hear very