

That, pursuant to Section 20 of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act (Chapter E-2, R.S.C., 1970), consideration be given by this House to the matter of an objection to the provisions of the Report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Ontario, laid before this House by Mr. Speaker on February 27, 1976, on the grounds set forth hereinafter:

The terms of reference I wish to use for my objection is Section 13(c)(ii) of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act, which states:

"... the Commission may depart from the strict application of rules (a) and (b) in any case where

(ii) any special community or diversity of interests of the inhabitants of various regions of the province appears to the Commission to render such a departure necessary or desirable."

This clause allowing for some flexibility for the determination of electoral boundaries is repeated in Schedule B of the Report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Ontario (1976):

"... the Commission may depart from such equality for any of the following reasons:

(2) special community or diversity of interests of the inhabitants of the various regions."

It is my allegation that the Report's presentment of the federal riding of Lincoln (see pg. 20-21), is in breach of the special community of interests as derived from the economic, social, historic, political and traditional associations of the Niagara fruit lands. The present boundaries of Lincoln, encompassing Niagara-on-the-Lake, Lincoln, Pelham, Grimsby and West Lincoln, reflects and follows a long-standing community of interest based on its rural, fruit-producing and agricultural characteristics.

The 1973 Report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission for Ontario (which was suspended on July 19, 1973) still preserved these interests when they described Lincoln as consisting of that part of the Regional Municipality of Niagara contained in the Townships of Wainfleet and West Lincoln, the Towns of Grimsby, Lincoln and Niagara-on-the-Lake and a small part of St. Catharines. A point to note here and one which shall be elaborated upon later, is that it is the City of St. Catharines which has always served as the urban centre and service centre for the Niagara fruit belt area stretching from Niagara-on-the-Lake as far as Grimsby.

The 1976 Report now proposes a major shift away from the traditional community ties as defined by the present Lincoln federal boundaries, by describing Lincoln as consisting of that part of the Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth contained in the Town of Stoney Creek and the eastern part of the City of Hamilton; and that part of the Regional Municipality of Niagara contained in the Towns of Grimsby and Lincoln.

The loss of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Pelham and West Lincoln to three other ridings, completely fragments the common agricultural interests which forms the dominant economic and social make-up on Lincoln and ends the

sharing of the many historic and traditional links long held in Lincoln.

On April 9, 1974, the Honourable Allan J. MacEachen in a statement made to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, remarked that:

"redistribution in Canada has been a continuous endeavour to find an equitable compromise between the affirmation of the principle of representation by population and the practical recognition of the particular nature of our political, social, cultural and geographical characteristics.

That population should not be the only criterion in redistributing seats among the provinces, is a concept well established in Canadian history.

Principle of representation by population alone has never been achieved as an absolute objective because of various conditions essentially flowing from our federal structure and geographical and social make-up, such as the requirement that no riding boundary may cross a provincial boundary, community of interest, density of population, etc.

Successive Parliaments have seen fit to accept, as well as the principle of representation by population, other equally valid principles relating to Canada's rather particular geographic, constitutional, historic and ethnic backgrounds."

These principles as expounded upon by the Honourable Allan MacEachen, are especially applicable to the case for Lincoln. In terms of historic, traditional, cultural, social, economic and community interests, Lincoln riding where it contains Niagara-on-the-Lake, Lincoln, Grimsby, Pelham and West Lincoln—is and always has been regarded as, considered and thus treated as a definite community unit.

This aspect can be viewed in economic terms—the Niagara Peninsula fruit lands present a unique and essential industry and agronomy in Canada. Aside from some fruit production in British Columbia and Nova Scotia, the Niagara region alone offers the important opportunity of growing such a wide variety of fruit for Canadians. The fruit industry in this area is one with many problems and particular interests and is one which will not be served well should it be divided among five different federal ridings and thus, become an insignificant concern in each of the five ridings. It is generally agreed upon by government and the public that the fruit industry in this area must be preserved and supported—it needs a unified strong representation from a federal member. It would be in the interests of all concerned and indeed for all Canadians, if the rural fruit-growing lands could remain together in a federally designated riding in order that a strong and united representation can be made on its behalf.

The boundaries set forth by the Commission in its 1976 Report also digress from the provincial riding boundaries, municipal and regional lines. On page 4 of the Report, the Commission states the principle that:

"Keeping in mind density of population as well as community interests, the Commission has drawn the