

## REDISTRIBUTION

READJUSTMENT OF REPRESENTATION IN THE  
HOUSE OF COMMONS

The house resumed, from Tuesday, July 1, consideration in committee of Bill No. 393, to readjust the representation in the House of Commons—Mr. Harris (Grey-Bruce)—Mr. Beaudoin in the chair.

On section 1—*Short title.*

**Mr. Drew:** Mr. Chairman, before we proceed with the discussion of this measure may I direct a question which might conceivably limit debate, if there is a possibility of that. I would point out that we are now still discussing the first section. I suggested the advisability of considering reference back of the constituencies which are particularly in dispute. Before we proceed with any further debate I would ask if the government has given consideration to the proposal made, that this matter be referred back, and that we proceed with the discussion of the estimates in the meantime.

**Mr. Harris (Grey-Bruce):** Mr. Chairman, there were two suggestions made last night by hon. members opposite, that by the hon. member for Peel and that by the leader of the opposition. In effect the hon. member for Peel suggested that even at this late date we might reconsider the question of having redistribution effected by an independent commission and, if that were not possible, that there be further consideration of the five or six particular constituencies he mentioned at that time.

With reference to the question of a redistribution commission: this House of Commons settled that, at least for the time being, by a vote last Saturday. I have not interrupted hon. members opposite, after the first one had spoken, by suggesting to you, Mr. Chairman, that they have been out of order. In fact, almost every one who has spoken has made direct reference to a commission.

I do not wish to instruct hon. members opposite on how to act in debate, but I do suggest that when they go further and make the specific suggestion of some other system, namely that of a redistribution commission, they are out of order in this debate. Nevertheless I wish to assure hon. members that the question of a redistribution commission will be given the most serious consideration. There are views which are held by members, and which are strongly held, on both sides of the question.

It is not an entirely open and shut question, one which can be decided overnight, merely by the assertion by hon. members opposite

*Redistribution*

that another system would be better than the one we now have. And I may say, Mr. Chairman, that I perhaps would be out of order myself if I were to discuss the matter, except that I was asked this question. However, I do wish to say one word about it, and then conclude this part of what I have to say.

Hon. members opposite have spoken in the most glowing terms about the success of what has been achieved in the United Kingdom and in other commonwealth countries. I am just hesitating to ask whether they read the debates of any of the legislatures to which they referred, for if they had I am sure they would not have made the statements they did make.

I am not going to give many opinions, but I am going to place on record one opinion, and then I shall say no more on this point. That is the opinion of the leader of the Conservative party in the United Kingdom, a gentleman who is held in the highest regard in this House of Commons, and whose words I have no doubt are frequently quoted by hon. members opposite. This is what he had to say with respect to a bill introduced by the government following the boundary commission report in the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Drew:** What is the date?

**Mr. Harris (Grey-Bruce):** It is reported at column 3042 of volume 448. He said:

This bill is based on no principle except that of party advantage and has no sanction behind it except the party majority, obtained on false pretences and with an electorate utterly disproportionate to the results produced in the House of Commons.

And so, let me conclude my reference to a redistribution commission by saying this, that it is not a closed question. We can study it and I can assure the house that we will give the most serious consideration to this question of redistribution.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Would the minister allow a question? Had he read that statement before he made the statement to Michael Barkway, as reported in *Toronto Saturday Night* of this week, that he is in favour of a commission?

**Mr. Harris (Grey-Bruce):** I had read it before I saw the article in *Saturday Night*, and I made no statement to the writer of that particular article. If he chooses—

**Mr. Fleming:** When the minister said that the question would be reconsidered, did he mean with respect to the present redistribution?

**Mr. Harris (Grey-Bruce):** No; I was going on to say that I have concluded what I have to