

*Redistribution*

in P.E.I. to call for reaction to the proposals it has presented, and conduct its hearings so that many people could take part in them, it would discover there was great reaction against arbitrarily establishing four ridings which in no way bear relationship to the three now in existence.

Just to give one example that to my mind seems to run contrary to a community of interest, it is that under the proposed redistribution part of the suburban territory directly west of Summerside is now in the eastern riding, and in effect the representative who will come from the western Egmont riding will be hopping over the other riding which intervenes. It certainly does not establish any kind of homogeneity and community of interest.

Another fact which has disturbed me is one already mentioned by my colleague, that now we are to have two large constituencies, Egmont with a population of 29,672 and Hillsborough with a population of 30,050, while Cardigan will have a population of 23,081, and Malpeque a population of 21,826. I would suggest there is greater discrepancy in the population of these constituencies than has existed previously because in the present situation we have two ridings that are somewhat similar in size, and a third smaller one.

What is even more disturbing, to me at least, is the realization that the proposed new two larger constituencies are the main centres of growth and, if the discrepancy is great according to the figures now before us in 1966, what will it look like for a future federal election, whether it comes in 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970 or 1971? I can but say that I think if there was need to create any constituencies, which in the case of P.E.I. I very much doubt, it should have been done on a much more equitable basis than we have before us in this report.

Then there is the matter of names. I suppose a name is about as subjective a thing as anyone can put forward. We all have certain ideas about what names should be, and I know there is certain geographical validity, although it can be argued both ways, that the names suggested—Cardigan, Egmont, Hillsborough and Malpeque—are significant for these new constituencies. But, considering the history and, may I say, the great men who have represented these ridings—and I would exclude myself from that reference—surely to lose the names of Queens, Prince and Kings would be somewhat tragic not only to the people of P.E.I. but to Canadians generally.

[Mr. Macdonald (Prince).]

If we must institute new names I suggest we consider maintaining the three we have at present, and adding an additional fourth in line with the same sense as these names, such as Royalty, or something like that. But if we are to abandon the traditional names, could we not have names significantly related to the history of P.E.I.? Obviously there are significant events and people connected with P.E.I. Why should they not be enshrined in the names of these new constituencies, as has been done at other times and in other places?

Then there is the matter of redistribution itself. We are told that according to the B.N.A. Act every ten years, after the census is taken, there should be an examination and a redistribution. We are now approaching very close to 1967. We are well over half way through from the time of the last census. In the light of the fact that things are changing so rapidly in this country one wonders whether we have achieved what we wanted to achieve by this particular redistribution, and why in effect in many cases if there was to be a wholesale abandonment of present constituencies of long standing, it might not have been done after much consultation and after an examination of other factors that come into play.

I quote from R. MacGregor Dawson, one of the great political scientists of our country, who many years ago wrote the following:

Two important principles have been generally accepted in Canada as justifying a departure from the general rule of the approximate equality of the constituencies. First, municipal and county boundaries should be followed when at all possible. It is considered far wiser to over or under-represent an area than to dismember districts which have established traditions, long history, and strong local pride and character.

All of this suggests to me that there are other factors that are more important to people than mere numbers. There is the sense of a representative really being theirs, in order that they may have a dialogue that goes on not only between themselves and their member of parliament but with each other. If this is to happen, a constituency must be some kind of homogeneous unit, and I fail to find much homogeneity in the new constituencies outlined to us.

I would hope, Mr. Speaker, we will be flexible enough to realize that while there may be certain problems for the chief returning officer of the country with regard to dual ridings, surely in a case as unique as P.E.I.—and I think it is unique alone in the fact that we have only four representatives, apart from everything else—we should have the courage