

*Electoral Boundaries Commission*

nature that has been brought in; we had one last week which was hypothetical when it was introduced.

I say if there is urgent business—and I think there is; I think there is very urgent business that should be before us—it is not expedient, to employ the language of the motion, to be debating something that can have no effect upon the course of events for several years to come, because it is now too late in the life of this parliament for it to have any effect.

It may be that the reason this is being done is in an attempt to create an impression upon the public for another general election, I do not know; but before we decide the basic question as to whether it is expedient to have a bill we are entitled to be told what the government envisages will happen in connection with it. We are also entitled to be told why it is being brought in now at this particular time in this particular session.

I said last night I am sure that unless an attempt is made to put undue pressure on the commission to make it work in a hasty and slipshod fashion it will be impossible for the work of any commission of this kind to be brought to completion within two years from the date of the passing of the legislation. If in fact the legislation had been enacted even as late as last year, and if the organizational work had all been completed so that on the day the census returns became available the job of redrawing the boundaries could have begun the next day—

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** The returns are not yet completed.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Yes, I know that. If I have time to do so I will shortly say something about that or perhaps later in the afternoon when I speak again.

In 1882 they were completed in time for the redistribution to be completed by parliament on May 17. In 1872, notwithstanding the nature of communications in this country at that time, they were able to complete the redistribution and have royal assent to the act on June 14.

**Mr. Hamilton (Notre Dame de Grace):** What about the population?

**Mr. Pickersgill:** The population has grown, but so have the electronic devices for dealing with these matters promptly.

**Mr. Hamilton (Notre Dame de Grace):** The population has also grown.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that if the bureau of statistics had been told that the work of gathering the basic data required for the redistribution, which does not involve counting all the cattle

[Mr. Pickersgill.]

in the country or processing all the data about other things but only involves getting the population statistics and nothing else for each constituency, should be expedited; if it had been given priority, there is no reason on earth why this information should not have been ready on April 10. I am not charging that they were told to have a deliberate slowdown, but it would require quite a lot to convince me that they had been asked to expedite it. I do not believe they have.

I suppose because I have been around a long time and have taken a certain amount of interest in these things I was asked more than a year ago what I envisaged about this matter, whether I thought there would be a redistribution or not before the next election, whenever it was, and I said, "Well, you know, I am not one to predict or to try to read the right hon. gentleman's mind—"

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Has the hon. gentleman a crystal ball, too?

**Mr. Pickersgill:** No, I have not. I think the right hon. gentleman's mind is something I ought not to try to read, and I do not try to read it; unlike many other people in the press gallery and elsewhere, whose reading of the right hon. gentleman's mind seems to be still pretty uninstructed, I simply do not try. I think it is too difficult. What I do say is that I did what I am sure every hon. member did. I made my own prediction. I am sure all hon. members did this, because we were all interested in whether our constituencies were going to be changed, and we were all interested in whether there would be a redistribution.

I said, "I know what will happen. It will be like everything else. It will be left to the last minute. At the last minute we will be told we must not have a conventional redistribution but that we must have a new kind, and then it will be too late; it will be mentioned in the speech from the throne in 1962." I made this prediction over a year ago.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Where did the hon. gentleman make this revelation?

**Mr. Pickersgill:** I could produce the witnesses. When the bill goes to the committee on privileges and elections, as all these bills always do, I shall be glad, if the Prime Minister is interested, to bring two or three witnesses to whom I made this statement. I do not think it would be very profitable to do so, and I am sure the right hon. gentleman does not doubt my word in this matter.

I made the prediction that it would be mentioned in the speech from the throne, that it would be at least three months or nearly three months after the speech from the throne was read before this urgent legislation was