

Redistribution

which were so accurately described by the Minister of Agriculture this afternoon. No hon. member need become impatient. They are going to hear a lot of arguments on the subsequent clauses and on the schedules.

Mr. Stuart (Charlotte): You may hear some, too.

Mr. Drew: I hope hon. members will not become impatient, because there will be opportunity to express their opinions in more detail. But on this first clause I am still expressing the hope that between now and eleven o'clock tomorrow the government will re-examine the statement of the Prime Minister, that they will come to the house at eleven o'clock tomorrow morning and will tell us that that statement was really intended to mean something.

What we have been told this afternoon by the Minister of Agriculture is that these committees were nothing but a sham, that the Liberal caucuses met and said what had to be done. Those were his words. They were told what had to be done.

Mr. Ferrie: Have you told them what they have to do now?

Mr. Drew: The hon. member who has just spoken obviously has not yet discovered that the government has not changed—

Mr. Stuart (Charlotte): And it will not; don't worry about that.

Mr. Drew:—and that the responsibility for government, unfortunately for the people of Canada, still rests with those who are disregarding so completely the statement of the Prime Minister as to what the policy of the government would be in regard to redistribution at this time.

Mr. McLure: Mr. Chairman—

Mr. Dickey: Whose turn is it? Get it straight, now.

Mr. McLure: I thought that at this time it might be well for me to say a few words with respect to Prince Edward Island, particularly the dual constituency of Queens. There has been a great deal of debate concerning different constituencies affected throughout Canada. I am not going to deal with any of those, and shall confine my remarks to the one in Prince Edward Island in which I am interested, the dual constituency of Queens.

In 1873, under Sir John A. Macdonald, Queens became a dual constituency. I am going to be brief in setting out the history of that constituency. I came here prepared, in case things went wrong, to give more detail. Perhaps I should say that after the census of 1891 there was a redistribution

bill in 1892 or 1893 under Hon. Mr. Thompson, who was then Prime Minister.

At that time the constituency of Queens was divided into East Queens and West Queens. This continued for a number of years until, in the redistribution following the census of 1901 and under the premiership of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the county was reunited and became again a dual constituency with the duty of electing two members, perhaps at times of one political complexion and at other times of different political views. I consider we should continue to have a dual constituency in Queens.

From 1903 on, further representations were made. After the census of 1911, that of 1921 and again in 1931 it was argued that the constituency should be divided again. But the prime ministers of the different governments holding office during those years were opposed to it, and believed it was better that it should remain as it was. In 1947 a direct drive was made by some persons to have the constituency divided into two constituencies of East Queens and West Queens. However, that did not go through.

I was not a member of the committee that studied this redistribution bill, but I attended two or three meetings, sitting on the sidelines. At the last meeting I attended the chairman of the committee said he would notify me when matters affecting Queens and the city of Charlottetown were before the committee.

In connection with matters affecting the subcommittee for the maritime provinces I dealt with the hon. member for Prince, who is parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Fisheries, and met him on two or three occasions. We talked the matter over, and I found him most attentive in listening to what I had to say. From him I learned, however, that considerable pressure was being brought to bear to change the boundaries and make a division of the constituency so that once again there would be two instead of one. When I thought there might be difficulty, I offered a compromise whereby if a division should be made, one part would be urban and the other rural. However, neither of these suggestions received any further consideration from the chairman of the subcommittee, or from the committee as a whole. I am grateful to the chairman of the main committee and to the chairman of the subcommittee for granting the request I made that if they could not divide it as I suggested, it be left as the dual constituency of Queens. But they might have corrected one thing in the description of the constituency. It reads:

Queens consisting of the county of Queens, which shall return two members.