

The third option would involve a more complex juggling of various municipalities. For example, parts of Chatham could be included to make up for electors lost if Harrow, Colchester North and Colchester South were to revert to Essex-Windsor. Alternatively, the town of Essex could be exchanged for Colchester North and South. Both these proposals, however, contain serious flaws. Once again there would be a serious effect on people who would receive no notice that their interests were being dealt with. The absence of arrangements for public discussion would particularly affect the residents of Essex and Chatham. Further, any such proposals would add to Essex-Kent towns with a more distant historical relationship or slighter economic base than the municipalities of Harrow, Colchester North and South presently share with Essex-Kent. This would be a less satisfying solution to the concerns which all hon. members have expressed today.

The weakest option left to the commission would be to return Harrow, Colchester North and South to Essex-Windsor without adding to Essex-Kent the area to the north recommended in the August proposal. Not only would this make the proposed constituency of Essex-Windsor an extremely large and difficult area to serve, notwithstanding the fact that it is being served well at this point, but it would augment the existing disparity between the two constituencies with regard to the number of electors. We might bear in mind that the population of this area is growing substantially. If a census were to be taken today I am sure the figures would show a substantial increase over those used by the commission. This proposal would give Essex-Windsor a population of 90,000, while reducing the population of Essex-Kent to something under 70,000 electors. Clearly, it would be less acceptable than any of the other possible solutions.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, permit me to reaffirm my qualified satisfaction with the August and the February proposals of the commission. I suggest, once again, that there is substantial difficulty with the statute as it now exists with respect to sufficient notice being given to people who will be intimately affected by changes made after the original announcement goes out. Substantial thought should be given to the possibility of providing notice to areas which will be affected when changes take place which are not announced in the original published proposals.

I look forward to continuing my representation of the people of Essex-Kent and will welcome enthusiastically the municipalities which the commission, in its wisdom, saw fit to add to my riding.

Miss Aideen Nicholson (Trinity): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by remarking, as other members have done this afternoon, that the task of the commission is a difficult and thankless one. Faced with the need to decide among conflicting choices, they can never hope to satisfy all interested parties.

In the proposed redistribution of seats in Ontario, the commissioners have generally arrived at a population in rural ridings of about 70,000, and in urban ridings of about 90,000. It seems that the commissioners, while struggling with their admittedly difficult task, were very much aware of factors involved in geographical distance. However, the drastic changes made to downtown Toronto ridings lead

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one to conclude that the commissioners paid less attention to factors concerning social and cultural distance. It is to these that I wish to address my remarks.

The geographical spread of a rural riding imposes certain obvious and easily understood constraints on the service to a constituency by its member of parliament. However, a member who represents an urban riding with a high proportion of new Canadians must work within the framework of other constraints which are equally legitimate in the discussion of communication, service and representation. Service to constituents and representation of the views of a constituency require the maintenance of all possible channels of communication, and there is a special need to involve constituents in the political process in an area which cannot be described as a community in the way a suburban or rural riding with clearly defined geographical boundaries might be so described.

One of the responsibilities of a member of parliament is, of course, to represent adequately the views of his or her constituency and to report back to constituents on parliamentary action. Members also spend considerable time assisting constituents in their dealings with government. To the extent that a member represents a riding with a very high proportion of new Canadians who are not familiar with our governmental structures, the number of problems which are likely to arise will be increased. The number of languages spoken makes for further complication. While most constituents have some knowledge of one of the official languages, the extent to which more complicated issues can be understood and explained is limited where there is a limited command of English or French.

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To members who represent ridings with a high proportion of new Canadians, a continuing concern is that of encouraging all citizens to develop a stronger and more effective sense of participating in the political process. Fuller and more broadly based participation in the political process yields many community and social benefits. It serves to reinforce the use of legitimate avenues toward, and mechanisms of, social change. It provides a training ground for future leaders. It exposes citizens to the political culture of our society and hence the broader values of our society. It is thus a force for constructive action. By providing a wider range of viewpoints and experiences, the participatory approach may well yield better decisions.

Canada is a multicultural nation within a bilingual framework. The realization of full and effective citizen participation in the political process in multicultural ridings such as Trinity presents special challenges. A major requirement for effective citizen participation is to preserve those circumstances that facilitate exposure to, and involvement in, political culture at the riding level. In ridings characterized by a large proportion of recent immigrants, such as Trinity, the process of exposure to, and involvement in, political culture is in large measure accomplished through informal group structures. These informal groups often grow up around community concerns and priorities. They represent a most important means for linking such concerns, priorities and needs with legitimate political mechanisms of change.