

*Electoral Boundaries Commission*

**Mr. Woolliams:** That may be the point, but what court? Say it is the chief justice of the province of Alberta or Saskatchewan. To interpret the law he must understand the framework of the law under which he is operating. If he interprets the law differently from another commissioner in another province, then you have confusion. I do not think that question is properly answered. The minister says go before the courts. What court would that go before?

**Mr. Pickersgill:** I do not think the hon. gentleman understood what I said. I said possibly it might be taken before the courts, and he raised the question with respect to Saskatchewan, and said there might be more than one interpretation of section 51 of the British North America Act. Well, under the legislation section 51 of the British North America Act is not going to be interpreted by this commission from Saskatchewan.

The commission from Saskatchewan will be given what I might call the accepted interpretation, and if anyone wants to challenge that in the courts, and say it is not the proper interpretation, it would be challenged by the ordinary processes of law. I would remind the hon. gentleman that the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre quite rightly regarded the practice in England as a model in many of these things, and they do not have one commission for the whole country. They have four, one for each of the divisions of the country.

**Mr. Churchill:** But in that connection the chairman of each of the commissions—

**The Chairman:** Order. The hon. member for Lake St. John.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Lessard (Lake St. John):** Mr. Chairman, I thank you for recognizing us, for I realize several members of the official opposition had a chance to put forward their point of view, and I would like to state mine very briefly. Whatever the decision taken tonight or tomorrow, as to whether it is appropriate to establish one commission or ten commissions, I believe it will be extremely difficult to create a perfect commission, as the commissioners will certainly experience difficulties or face certain problems.

Nevertheless, to echo, at it were, the remarks of the hon. member for Fraser Valley (Mr. Patterson) in this connection, I may say we unanimously recognize that with ten commissions, we shall have a better chance to do justice to the provinces.

Like other hon. members, we have fought to a certain extent in order that the provinces may have a fair representation and may express their views. I feel that the proposal

placed before us tonight, namely to establish a commission for each province, is entirely in line with the aim of confederation which is that each province should be able to express its own views.

Some hon. members have said that this procedure would be much more expensive. Personally, I do not think so, for if the commission, for instance, sitting to establish the boundaries of electoral ridings in Prince Edward Island—the smallest province in the country—worked only one week to complete the job, it certainly would only be paid on that basis for its work. On the other hand, if the Ontario commission had to work two or three months to complete its job, it would also be paid on that basis.

This way, I think we would avoid all the travelling that would go on if we had a single commission which would have to move about, from Vancouver to Halifax, to hear representations or claims from the various groups concerned.

Mr. Chairman, I think that the ten commission formula is probably the best we could consider at this time, even if it has some disadvantages. That is why I think we should accept that clause as it is and carry on our discussion of this bill.

[*Text*]

Clause agreed to.

Clauses 4 and 5 agreed to.

On clause 6—*Appointment of chairman, etc.*

**Mr. Knowles:** Clause 6 is the clause which provides for the manner in which the members of the various commissions are to be appointed. We have now established, by the clauses we have passed, that there will be ten commissions and that each commission shall consist of four members. The wording of clause 6 as it now appears in the bill, provides for the chairman of the commission to be appointed by the chief justice of the province from among the judges of the court over which he presides. It also provides for the fourth member of the commission in each province to be the representation commissioner. The other two members are to be appointed on the nomination, in one case of the Prime Minister, and in the other of the Leader of the Opposition.

As we indicated in the debate on the second reading of this bill, we think an improvement could be made with respect to the naming of those two commissioners. We can understand the motivation which led to the wording of the clause as we now have it, but we feel that if we are to get this business of redistribution completely away from partisan considerations, or at least as far away as it is humanly possible to do so, we should not have two of the commissioners