

*Government Orders*

ownership of this. Let us give the public some say in its operation.

Most Canadians and particularly residents of Ontario did not hear about the revision. It came as a shock to them and they had to respond in some cases as early as the next two weeks. So to mobilize, to liaise one with another, to communicate with those groups who have been disturbed, to question why such changes have taken place, the time was not there. We are talking a lot of people and we are talking the affect. I am talking of mobilizing and reacting to the changes in my own province of Ontario.

Ontario presently has 99 seats. One of the rules under which this commission was to undertake change was that there would be a minimum of disturbance of existing boundaries.

They talk about the ripple effect. I want to tell you that if there was ever a ripple it was a big ripple in Ontario to get four seats. Ninety-three of the ridings were changed rather significantly.

The principle was that there be some approximation in size in the constituencies in Ontario. The commission's mandate gave a rather generous leeway. Twenty-five per cent is a rather large deviation from the norm.

As a consequence, in Ontario the demographic computer crunched them out closely with its cookie cruncher to the 97,000 to 100,000 range. Many ridings that were sitting well within that range and smack on 100,000 had radical change and it has upset the communities in which that change took place.

In my riding the county council will be taking a bus to the hearing. The city councils and the township councils will be taking a bus to the hearing because traditionally a constituency has a community of interest. That community of interest is focused on its local governments whether they be township, town, city or county.

• (1520)

Many of these fundamental community of interests were hacked in half and for no reason attached to another half of another county that was hacked in half. The rationale of community of interest seemed to go by the board. That is why we are upset. I can tell members that my constituents are upset. This is the second major change in southwestern Ontario and only one riding escaped without any change whatsoever.

As a consequence, I would like to make a point that the ripple effect in 93 of the 99 ridings was not acceptable to the residents of Ontario. These residents are not all Liberals although I would like to think they would be.

I have received protests from people from all walks of life and it does not have anything to do with my being a Liberal member. They do not want to be associated with someone who has been connected with another township. There is a narrow gap and we go back into another base.

It does not even have any sort of congruency or shape. It is stretched out to almost Lake Huron and on the other side, Waterloo county. It was a compact riding of 101,000 people meeting specific criteria where community of interest and size were dead on. The people in my riding want to know what the rationale was for the major surgery in the riding of Perth—Wellington—Waterloo.

I would like to read from the direction and general notes given to the commissioners on their mandate. The act directs the commission to divide Ontario into 103 districts. On the basis of the population of each electoral district in the province, it shall be as close as reasonably possible to correspond to the electoral quota of that province.

We all know that some of the ridings in northern Ontario, by their nature, by the ability to service the constituency, must necessarily be smaller than some of the ridings in the urban areas where one can contact and relate to their constituents in a speedier manner.

For those of us who were in urban-rural ridings, the norm would be about 100,000. The commission may depart from this quota where necessary or desirable. The commission's judgment lay in directives and it has given the two commissioners for Ontario tremendous scope.

First, the commission is to respect the community of interest or community of identity in the historical pattern of an electoral district in the province. That one has been shot out of the water in a big way.

Second, it is to maintain a manageable geographic size for districts in sparsely populated, rural or northern regions of the province. I concur with that.

In considering these factors, the commission must make every effort to ensure that except in extraordinary circumstances the population of each electoral district remains within 25 per cent, a reasonably grand margin of error I would say by any statement. The upper limit of the quota plus 25 per cent from the norm which is 122,000 to the lower limit of 25 per cent which is 73,000 is very rarely reached. The first principle was totally compromised so that the second principle could crunch out ridings with populations of 97,000 to 103,000. The community of interest and the community of economic interest, which is just as important in most of those ridings, was shot out of the water, to use a colloquial term.