

of time, it does not seem fair that southern Ontario should gain eight seats and northern Ontario lose one. This is the case we have to make.

● (1710)

I will conclude by restating one or two points. Most members of this House, especially those who debated this issue in 1973 and 1974, believe that no province or area like northern Ontario should lose a seat in redistribution. The members from northern Ontario and northwestern Ontario were some of the most assiduous in trying to make this case. Because of these efforts of members from northern Ontario and other provinces, this change was made. Southern Ontario, with its additional seats, is being well rewarded for its increase in population. Northern Ontario should at least hold its own. Northern Ontario, which needs help and does not have services like other parts of the country, should be looked after in terms of maintaining the number of seats it has at present. I hope the commission will look very carefully at the reduction of one seat in northern Ontario and reinstate the twelfth seat in its final report.

Mr. Bill Jarvis (Perth-Wilmot): Mr. Speaker, I intend to be as brief as possible because I know there are members in the chamber whose interests are of more concern, generally speaking, than mine. I want to make two points, one in a general sense and one in a parochial sense, about an area which I do not represent but about which I have a great deal of concern.

The first general comment I wish to make is that in my assessment this commission, in terms of its integrity vis-à-vis southern Ontario, an area about which I know quite a bit, is to be commended. Without reservation or qualification, I offer them my very humble thanks. With regard to the first map I did not have a reaction to the same degree as the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham (Mr. Lawrence) because it did not affect me as directly as many of my good neighbours and came as a shock to many people. However, when they had their hearings, particularly in London—which was the only one I attended—I was very impressed with the honest desire of all the commissioners to achieve something that was in the best interests of the Canadian people, not just members of parliament but those we are elected to represent.

The commissioners turned their backs on the numbers game in southern Ontario and the artificial boundaries. They looked to the community of interest of people who were in danger of feeling further and further removed from their own government. I say again, without qualification or reservation, that I offer them my most humble appreciation. I believe I speak for a good number of my colleagues in southern Ontario when I say that. If there could be any evidence of that, the nature of some of the objections that have been made in the last two days—and I do not minimize even changing the name of a riding, because it is important to the people there—might be referred to as being of a minor nature. I think that is a great tribute to the commission.

Having said that, may I take a few minutes to take up the cause in northern Ontario vis-à-vis the riding of Sault Ste. Marie. Yesterday the hon. member for Lanark-Renfrew-Carleton (Mr. Dick) mentioned this. I will continue in that vein because we received some additional informa-

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tion an hour or so ago regarding the difficulty in which the people of that area find themselves. Possibly the commission will be able to make some accommodation for them. I preface my remarks by saying that in a political sense all parties of that area are in general accord with the difficulties that will be faced by people in the area commonly known in Sault Ste. Marie as ward I if it is split from the rest of the city. I have before me an excerpt from the Sault Ste. Marie *Star* of Thursday, March 4, 1976, which I presume is an accurate report of the attitude of the three political parties in that area. They express grave concern about and, indeed, opposition to the fact that the most densely populated residential area of Sault Ste. Marie will be orphaned from the rest of the city.

I think it is appropriate to read into the record a very brief resolution that we just received from the Sault Ste. Marie chamber of commerce. It reads as follows:

The Sault Ste. Marie and district chamber of commerce is opposed to any electoral boundary adjustment which will reduce the present geographical size of the riding of Sault Ste. Marie because Sault Ste. Marie is a cohesive, densely populated urban unit with goals and problems which are generally different from those of the adjacent rural riding of Algoma.

Obviously, they want to be made one unit. It may be impossible for the commission to accommodate them. If there is room for some flexibility, and I do not speak for any political parties but simply for some of my friends from that area, I ask the commission to consider, rather than splitting ward I which is in the southeastern portion of the city, directing their minds to the possibility of ward VI which is generally that area lying west of Goulais Avenue. That appears to be a relatively new area. It is not densely populated. In comparison to ward I, it may be an area which would lend itself more naturally to inclusion with the other riding rather than ward I. I can sympathize with those people in ward I who face the prospect of being divorced from their traditional riding, particularly when I know it is a highly populated, residential area. I had the same condition in my own constituency in the 1967-68 redistribution. I picked up one municipality in an adjacent riding. It was not a happy situation for many of the good people in that area.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I again direct my thanks to the commission. On behalf of the good people of Sault Ste. Marie, I hope the commission will be able to consider some form of accommodation to make that riding a more natural one by retaining ward I within the city riding and, just possibly, considering taking ward VI in its place if that should be necessary.

Hon. Stanley Haidasz (Parkdale): Mr. Speaker, we have initiated an important and vital debate in the House of Commons, a debate on our democratic institution of a freely elected parliament, the redistribution of federal electoral boundaries which are based on the important principle of representation by population.

May I take this opportunity of expressing our appreciation to the members of the federal Electoral Boundaries Commission of Ontario for their efforts and for hearing our representations in the past and again this afternoon. I made a representation to them on October 22, 1975, when they came to Ottawa to hear us. Today, I want to take the opportunity of again expressing what I believe are some