

Redistribution

Reverting again to this old expression we hear that people are hurt by redistributions, I would say again that the only people in this redistribution likely to be injured in Nova Scotia are the people of Queens-Shelburne in the first instance, who will be deprived of the services of Dr. Donald Smith, and in the second instance Dr. Donald Smith himself, who will likely be deprived of the honour of representing the people of Shelburne and Queens counties in the parliament of Canada.

Mr. Knowles: He could go to Queens-Lunenburg.

Mr. Winters: I said Queens and Shelburne. As hon. members know, Dr. Smith earlier this year underwent a very serious operation and is still incapacitated because of it. I am sure hon. members will be pleased to know that Dr. Smith is improving. He has already given outstanding public service and, God willing, he will continue to find ways to further the interests of the people of Queens county in other fields.

Mr. Wright: Mr. Chairman, may I say with the hon. member for Lunenburg that we hope for Dr. Smith a speedy recovery and a return to public service. It is not my purpose in rising to get into a debate with regard to redistribution either past or present in Nova Scotia. But I do think that, as a neutral member of the Nova Scotia committee, I should give the committee what was my understanding as to what took place at the first meeting of that subcommittee.

The first thing that was agreed upon was that Queens-Shelburne should be the seat that would be eliminated in Nova Scotia. The second agreement that was reached at that meeting, as I understood it, was that Annapolis-Kings should remain as it was, and that the other Liberal members of the committee would be left free to decide what would happen to Digby county. It was explained that the minister was in Nova Scotia at the time, and would not be available for a day or two. The members of the committee asked that the matter be left open, with no decision being taken at that meeting as to what should be done with Digby county.

I may say I was rather surprised when I returned to Ottawa after having been in the west to find that Digby municipality out of Digby county had been returned to Annapolis-Kings. My memory is clear on the matter because, after we left the committee meeting which was held in the room

of the hon. member for Prince, I spoke to the present member for Annapolis-Kings and remarked to him that his seat was being left as it was at that time. He appeared to be quite pleased. That was the way the matter stood, so far as I was concerned. That is what I understood, at least, as to what the agreement was at that first meeting.

I think the amendment offered by the hon. member for Annapolis-Kings in the main committee, in which he suggested that Digby-Yarmouth plus Barrington municipality should be one seat, and that Lunenburg, Queens and the Shelburne municipality should be another seat, was a reasonable suggestion. Certainly it left the populations in those constituencies reasonably equal. Annapolis-Kings had 54,930; Digby-Yarmouth-Barrington had 49,356, and Queens-Lunenburg-Shelburne had 53,619. That seemed a reasonable division of population. The only objection offered was that which I mentioned before, namely the argument with regard to shore line. It was argued that Digby-Yarmouth-Barrington had a much greater shore line than Annapolis-Kings, and because the members from that area considered it was more difficult to represent fishermen than farmers they decided to make the division in another way.

I do not know whether it is more difficult to represent fishermen than farmers, because I have always represented farmers in the House of Commons. I know that as a group they are fairly easy to represent. Usually they work out their own difficulties. I am inclined to think that fishermen are probably the same, and that taken as a class they are not any more difficult to represent in the house than any other group of individuals in Canada. Certainly on the basis of population I think the amendment offered to the main committee was reasonable. Certainly my understanding of what took place at the first committee meeting is as I have stated it, namely that Queens-Shelburne was to be the county in Nova Scotia which was to be taken out, that Annapolis-Kings was to remain as it was, and that it was left to the Liberal members of the committee to decide, in consultation with the hon. member for Lunenburg, what they considered would be a fair division with regard to the other three counties.

Mr. Graydon: Mr. Chairman, I shall not delay the proceedings of the committee very long this evening, but I do wish to make some comments and what I hope will be some constructive suggestions with respect to the matter causing so much anxiety in the committee, and dealing with representation of the various constituencies in Canada.