

Redistribution

of persons and from those persons electing one member of parliament. That is not parliament and it is not representative government. In section 13(c) of the act there are any number of reasons why this is not to be. An analysis of the arguments advanced by hon. members at the time we were discussing redistribution as to why there should be variations indicates that three factors must be taken into account. I am sure there are members on the treasury benches today who are most surprised that certain commissions have ignored or have seemed to ignore elementary principles of demography, elementary principles of geography and, even more important, the quality of representation that those people would receive as a result of the political division in which they will have to live.

It is obvious, and I reiterate what has been said by my three colleagues from Alberta who have spoken before me, that there is a complete absence of community interest as a result of the report. We could go into any number of constituencies and find that. I thoroughly agree with all that has been said in so far as the proposed constituency of Rocky Mountain is concerned.

• (5:20 p.m.)

One could continue the litany of criticism. We already have constituencies in this country in which, by reason of their relative isolation and great size, nomination dates are advanced by a fortnight and other factors are taken into account. Admittedly no greater travelling expenses are allowed to the candidates or to the members. Frankly, this proposal will create another such situation because, as the hon. member for Red Deer (Mr. Thompson) has pointed out, to get into this Rocky Mountain constituency one would have to travel in and out like a stitching machine or a zipper going up the eastern side. This is the great difficulty when trying to deal with a constituency some 25 or 30 miles wide at its southern extremity, some 125 miles at its greatest width, and 700 miles in length.

Take the western extremities from the constituencies of Lethbridge, Macleod and part of Calgary South. In actual fact, it comes within the southerly boundaries of the city of Calgary, Bow River, Red Deer and the bulk of Jasper-Edson. It is conceivable there may even be one row of townships of the constituency of Peace River.

Mr. Thompson: There is.

[Mr. Lambert.]

Mr. Lambert: This is playing tick-tack-toe. I would earnestly pray the commission to review this situation. These remarks have been made before the commission. I appeared before it as one of the first witnesses. The proposal by the commission for a Rocky Mountain constituency was attacked almost unanimously. We could have had a much more intelligent dialogue with the commission had they stated their reasons for rejecting the arguments we put forward. I said that representation is not a mere hiving together of so many thousands of people within certain arbitrary political boundaries. As we all realize, the purpose of an election is to give a representative to people, and in order that this representative may be in a position to perform his task effectively there must be access to the people he represents and they in turn must have access to their member. As far as possible he should be able to live in the centre of his constituency, accessible from all its corners. There is not one place in Rocky Mountain where this could be done. The same could be said about the constituency of Athabasca. There is not one road, not one railroad, which goes through the constituency of Athabasca along the main core of the population. There will soon be a road running to a point within 180 miles of the north of that constituency, between the new oil development centre of McMurray and the town of Lac la Biche, but beyond that there is nothing.

There is nothing so ludicrous as the attempt to lump into one area the town of Peace River, the home town of the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) which is being taken away from him, and the area not so many miles north of Lloydminster on the Alberta-Saskatchewan boundary. To reach the developing area of Fort Vermilion and High Level, all this area which is developing as a result of the building of the Pine Point railway which is now being placed in the constituency of the hon. member for Athabasca, that hon. member would need to cross the Peace River, go well into the latter constituency, then head north on the Mackenzie highway before re-entering the constituency he represents. It might be a good thing if members of this commission had to travel the boundaries of these constituencies which they have created, and in the depths of winter too. Then we would see where they would get. I am sure something has been lost sight of.