

Government Orders

It is the same with the radio stations. These three rural areas that I would get in redistribution do not pick up the radio stations centred on Hamilton which would have the greatest interest in what I do. They instead are served by radio stations in Brantford, Cambridge and in these other areas.

Again the difficulty and the reality of the media is if they are going to do a news story on someone and that someone is of importance to perhaps only 5 per cent of their listeners the chances of them actually doing a news story is very limited.

• (1820)

That is the dilemma. The chances of people hearing what I do in these two rural blocks is very, very limited.

There is another side to the coin which is equally difficult. I have a responsibility as an MP to serve the people in my riding, and I have to serve those people community by community. At present I can follow what happens in my community by again turning to the local media. I have three community newspapers, I have the major daily paper and I also have the television station and radio.

The difficulty is that I have to now follow three more communities through the media. That means I would have to pay attention to these three other newspapers, I would have to pay attention to the radio stations and I would have to follow the local governments in three additional cities and municipalities.

I just do not think it is possible for one MP to cover that large a territory successfully, to be up on the news and be up on what concerns people over that vast area. Consequently I find that the kind of redistribution I am looking at is very flawed.

It is a question in my mind of philosophy. The reason we have to bring in a bill like Bill C-18 is not to interfere with a body outside of government that has been appointed to do a particular task. Our job as legislators is to give them the philosophy to operate. We have to define for them when they make this redistribution what they are doing and why they are doing it. It would appear from what I see now that in the past they have looked at the numbers purely and they have not given due attention to the question of community of interest, how our information comes from the politician to the people and how the politician gets the information from the people.

I would strongly support the intent of this bill because I think we are in the business here in this 35th Parliament of looking at reform of institutions in the sense of how better we can serve the people of Canada and our constituents. I think if we re-examine the philosophy of redistribution we may indeed find that numbers are not the last word of this issue, that it is how best the MP can represent perhaps a geographic entity.

Some of my colleagues have mentioned that in northern Ontario, for example, the numbers are sparse but the community of interest is based on history and geography. If you do it straight by numbers of course you are going to skew our historic responsibility to the people of Canada whom we serve regionally.

In concluding, I think this is a very fine move by this government. I really do wish that the members of both parties, particularly the Reform Party, would reconsider because I think this is the kind of reform that all of us in this House wish to see.

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to Bill C-18. My riding of Kootenay West—Revelstoke is very adversely affected by the proposed boundaries adjustment act. The riding is currently made up of two specific geographic areas which have much in common. Virtually all of my riding is located in a valley setting on or near one of three waterways.

There are some notable exceptions in this for mountainous communities such as Rossland and Warfield. The entire riding is involved in forestry, hydroelectric power generation and tourism. The Columbia River treaty affects all communities on or near the river from Trail in the south of the riding to Revelstoke in the north.

Many people travel between towns for work and recreational purposes. In the interests of economy we have learned how to share. For example, in 1996 Trail and Castlegar are jointly hosting the British Columbia Summer Games. Either community is too small to host this by itself, but by working together the 1996 games should be a spectacular success.

In short, we are a riding consisting of commonality of both geography and concerns. The proposal under the current Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act effectively dismantles this riding that has so much in common.

The West Kootenay portion of the riding is split down the middle with Trail and surrounding communities being placed in a riding that would find its centre in the Okanagan, 200 miles to the west, an area that has nothing in common with its new addition. The rest of the West Kootenays would find itself in a riding with its centre 200 miles to the east, again with little in common with its new addition.

• (1825)

Revelstoke would find itself in a new riding made up of parts of the north Okanagan where it would likely centre. This riding would then proceed east past Revelstoke and the Rogers Pass, all the way to the Alberta border and include the northern portion of the former Kootenay East. Kootenay East would have to give up this portion of its old riding to make up for receiving the chunk that came from Kootenay West which no one asked for. Revels-