

Redistribution

bution into question. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. Members are not just looking after their own interests, as was suggested in the editorial in the *Globe and Mail* to which I referred. They happen to know, and have a greater interest in, the rights of the electors and how to service the electors than those people who sit on the fence and pontificate.

Mr. J. H. Horner (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, I should like to rise and say one or two more words about redistribution and how it affects the province of Alberta. As I understand it, this debate sends the whole question of redistribution and the map proposed by the electoral boundaries commission for the province of Alberta back to that commission for what might be considered a re-examination for another look at the wisdom of some of the boundary lines they have drawn. We do not expect them to accept any changes but, as the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert) has said, we have seen and witnessed,—I would not really call it gerrymandering, but what I would call complete ignorance of representation in a province such as Alberta.

I think the debate here and the brief submitted to the electoral boundaries commission shows that the province of Alberta is unique in that both city members and rural members have complained about the job that was done. The *Globe and Mail* today has an editorial based upon, and referring to, some remarks that I have made in the debate on the redistribution bill. The article reads:

Conservative Jack Horner is therefore attacking what never existed when he attacks representation by population, and he knows it.

Representation by population has not been adhered to exactly in Canada because of certain conditions laid down in the British North America Act. I am fully aware of that. We in the province of Alberta, though, are unique in the fact that we neither gain nor lose in numbers in the redistribution.

One would expect, then that a certain shift was necessary to correspond with the shift in population based upon the 1971 census. In this particular case the commission felt that they must superimpose their expectations upon the future ten years and take 1971 only as a base. When I appeared before the commission they advised me, in answer to my questions, that they expected Calgary to grow faster than Edmonton. Calgary was rated at 80,000 and the city at Edmonton at 87,000 average. I suggest, if this is the case, Calgary will soon surpass Edmonton in population, according to their expectations.

Since I appeared before the commission, figures reveal that Calgary over-estimated their population, and the census of the city of Calgary is in question. It is suggested that Calgary could have upped their census to get a better redistribution of money out of the provincial government than the city of Edmonton. All these things come into play. At no time did the commission have to substantiate why they felt Edmonton would grow more slowly than Calgary in the next ten years.

The commission specify that the population in rural areas will continue to decline, and fail to take into consideration some of the growth centres in the province of Alberta particularly, but not necessarily, those in the

[Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West).]

major cities of Calgary and Edmonton. In my own constituency of Crowfoot the town of Brooks will easily reach 10,000 by 1980. They did not consider this. In fact, I doubt very much if members of the commission had a very good knowledge of anything outside the two cities of Calgary and Edmonton. They hardly knew what the irrigation district was doing and the development in the western part of the province in the Rocky Mountain area that was taking place. They seemed bent on the idea that they, and they alone, could forecast the growth centres in the province of Alberta.

With 19 seats existing now and no gain at all, one could expect not major disruptions in the electoral boundaries system but minor disruptions, taking into consideration the growth indicated in the 1971 census—not the expected growth of some wishful thinkers and boards of trade in some of the cities. It is obvious the city of Calgary was given the idea that it was going to grow at a tremendous rate. If it does, surely many people today would assume that the city centre would not be the growth centre of the city, not populationwise anyway, but that it would be the suburban areas of the city that would grow.

In this latest redistribution, Calgary centre has remained at about 81,000, less than the constituency in which I now find myself called Medicine Hat, which in this redistribution was given a population of 84,000. Why would the commission expect Calgary centre to grow in population? As the hon. member for Edmonton West has said, they should be asked to substantiate the mess they have made or the good case they have made, whichever it might be.

Why take the eastern part of Alberta and block out a rectangular area a little better than 200 miles long and a little better than 100 miles wide, and say that it has a community of interest and that geographically that area should be together? In Alberta traffic on highways moves east and west. It comes from the east to the city of Calgary, and from the east to the city of Edmonton, and does not move north and south along the Saskatchewan border. This projected riding makes no sense to me whatever.

The town of Hanna which has been the centre of some ridings—the one that I first represented called Acadia—has very little in common with the city of Medicine Hat. So why put the two together? They are 250 miles apart, there is no community of interest in the area at all, yet we see them together in the same riding. We see a direct refusal to accept the principle of the 25 per cent formula.

There is no question that they took the population of the province of Alberta at 1,600,000 and divided it by 19, getting a quotient of 85,600. Then they said quite clearly that no riding should have a population greater than 107,000 and less than 64,000. They did not even attempt to get close to those extremities. Why? They have never had to substantiate why they did not. They felt that they knew best and went along with their own concepts of where the growth areas would be.

• (1740)

The commission showed complete disregard for the concept of representation, that the people of the riding should get to know a member and feel they can approach him.