

*Electoral Boundaries*

er and I would like to take advantage of this opportunity to congratulate the commissioners for the magnificent job they did in surveying the various ridings.

As I say, we are very satisfied with the redistribution we have been given and, in order to meet the needs of the municipalities I mentioned earlier, if it were possible that a change be made in these municipalities so that they come back in the riding of Berthier-Maskinongé, I think it would be a complete success.

**Mr. Alexandre Cyr (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works):** Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief. First, I wish to take part in this debate not to object to the report of the federal Electoral Boundaries Commission, but to congratulate the members of the Quebec commission for their attitude concerning the redistribution of the ridings in the Gaspé Peninsula.

I was first elected to the House of Commons in 1963 and at that time the constituency of Gaspé included the municipalities from Newport to Les Méchins. At the 1966 redistribution, the municipalities of Cap-Chat, Capucins and Les Méchins were removed from the riding of Gaspé. That part of Gaspé Peninsula is now part and parcel of the riding of Matane. I therefore, approve the commission's decision to restore the natural sociological unity by re-integrating the town of Cap-Chat in the beautiful riding of Gaspé. The town of Cap-Chat has common interests with the town of Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, and I gladly welcome the return of Cap-Chat citizens in the riding of Gaspé, more especially as they are very sympathetic people and very eager to cooperate in the economic and social development, not only of their town but of Gaspé Peninsula as a whole. Mr. Speaker, it is always pleasant to meet friends again after 10 years of separation.

**Mr. Albert Béchard (Bonaventure-Îles-de-la-Madeleine):** Mr. Speaker, I shall be very brief to give all my colleagues from Quebec and from the other provinces a chance to take part in the debate. I shall not waste my time saying that the commissioners are totally inefficient because I think that the commissioners needed our advice since they produced the last report or the report before. As a matter of fact, like my colleague the hon. member for Gaspé (Mr. Cyr) who almost became one of my electors, I am pleased to see that I have been left with a huge riding but that the hon. member for Gaspé keeps the riding of Gaspé and that a portion of this riding, which until 1949 was part of the constituency of Bonaventure-Îles-de-la-Madeleine, has been reintegrated in this riding; I mean the town of Causapsal which is today so adequately represented by the hon. member for Matane (Mr. De Bané).

By the way, the hon. member for Matane mentions in his objection it would be more advantageous for some towns and municipalities included in the constituency of Bonaventure-Îles-de-la-Madeleine and Gaspé to belong to the constituency of Matane. I do not understand his argument very well. It is impossible to figure out the intentions, and I do not want to attribute any intentions to him, but he says it would be more interesting for them to belong to the constituency of Matane. I want to reassure the future electors of Causapsal and the surroundings that their hon. member will do his utmost to represent them as adequately

[Mr. Yanakis.]

as the present hon. member for Matane did since he has been their representative in the House of Commons.

● (2130)

Mr. Speaker, I should like to join with my colleague from Papineau (Mr. Ouellet) and others in congratulating the commissioners to a reasonable extent however since as my colleague for Champlain (Mr. Matte) said quite rightly we should not comply only to the letter of the legislation but rather to its spirit and act with common sense.

I would not want to criticize the judges as it seems quite improper but at least, in this House, I enjoy parliamentary immunity.

I had asked, not only when the last Commission presented its report but before that and I did so on behalf of my constituents in that part of the Bonaventure riding called Iles-de-la-Madeleine that the Iles-de-la-Madeleine riding be recognized as a riding as it was since 1945, I think. Unfortunately, the commissioners who have to follow the letter of the legislation ignored my request because of the limited population of those islands and left them in the Bonaventure riding.

By the way, I am very grateful to my constituents of the Iles-de-la-Madeleine whom I have had the privilege to represent ever since 1968. But what concerns me, Mr. Speaker, is to find out that rural communities are going to disappear in this House just because the act sets a population level for a given riding. Gradually it will eliminate the rural representation from this House. And I think that it might be this lack of strong representation of the rural communities which explains why our area in eastern Quebec which includes the Gaspé Peninsula, the lower Saint-Lawrence and the Iles-de-la-Madeleine, has been neglected for too long.

And today, because of that business of figures, a rural member will be given an immense territory even with a low density population while urban representatives are particularly privileged. As I said, a Montreal member can cover his riding in 15 minutes while in my case and many others as the representative of the Bonaventure and Iles-de-la-Madeleine riding, it might take one week or two.

The Bonaventure and Iles-de-la-Madeleine riding, in its continental part, is 170 miles long from east to west. The Magdalen Islands are located 175 miles from the mainland as the crow flies. Mr. Speaker, you will have the honour of visiting this beautiful section of my riding during your next vacation. You will be able to see by yourself what distance you have to cover to drive from Valleyfield to the Magdalen Islands.

So the member who represents Bonaventure and Magdalen Islands must go to the islands from time to time and the problems of these islands are not those of Bonaventure, or the Gaspé Peninsula, Témiscouata, Rivière-du-loup or Kamouraska. This is why, therefore, we had asked to make an exception and to make the islands an independent riding, and the present member might have gone and introduced himself to the islanders and I would have considered it a great honour and a great pleasure to do so.

Another point, Mr. Speaker. When we appear before the commissioners and complain, then they tell us: You make the law, we enforce it. We need 86,000 people here; we need