

While travelling to Ottawa last Sunday evening I had a chat with an individual employed by the treasury department. This person told me that a great many individuals in that department do not have enough work to satisfy their own need of accomplishment. If individuals in such a department have the feeling that they are not accomplishing something worth-while for the government, why could a few of them not be made accessible to opposition members so that they could perform their duties in a much more meaningful way, while at the same time giving us more effective government?

We have also heard much criticism from various members concerning the work the commissions have done in redrawing these boundaries. Let me remind members that it was this House which gave the commissions the power to do so, and if members do not like what they have done, all the members need do is bring forward specific legislation in this Chamber so that this Chamber dictates the boundaries of the various constituencies.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I should like to lend my support to some of the points the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona (Mr. Roche) made. The one specific recommendation is the name change of the two constituencies on the south side of Edmonton. I feel as strongly as he does that the names should be switched so that the constituency named Edmonton-Strathcona would be called Edmonton South, and vice versa in respect of the constituency of Edmonton South, because there is a great deal of historical tradition based in the constituency on the west side of the south side of Edmonton which necessitates that the name ought to be Edmonton Strathcona.

Mr. Arnold Malone (Battle River): Good morning, Mr. Speaker. I suppose one should start by complimenting the commission for the very diligent and time-consuming task it has undertaken. I am sure you would agree, Mr. Speaker, after the tremendous amount of work the commissioners have put into the study, and after the many complaints they have received, that one would wonder whether Hamlet could have been written by a commission. I am sure the commissioners must feel frustrated at times while performing their task of trying to resolve what probably is an unresolvable problem. I venture to suggest that if there were a group of commissioners which could come up with perfect boundaries a miracle would be performed.

Having said that I wish to register two general points, and one specific one relating to my constituency. First, I want to underscore the remarks of those who already have adopted the position that it is the wrong direction to take to suggest that the House of Commons should increase in respect of the number of seats every time the population census indicates that Canada has grown in population numbers.

The fact of the matter is that if the number of people represented in this Chamber increases, the other related factor must remain static. I refer to the factor of time. If we get more people in this House, the days do not become more frequent in a year and the hours do not become more numerous in a day. We will still have years of 52 weeks. More people in the House of Commons would simply mean that a member would ask less questions in the question period, would speak less often in the House of Commons, and in fact would represent less frequently the constitu-

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ents of his riding. I submit the larger the size of the House of Commons, the more government there would be by cabinet.

In effect this would mean, in the words of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), that the larger the House of Commons the more members of parliament would become nobodies. I suggest that ought not to be the trend. Perhaps at the time we are considering bringing home the constitution of this country we should consider establishing a permanent number of members of parliament so that in the years to come we do not end up in the same position of trying to expand the number of members of this House.

I suggest it might be better if we trimmed off 50 or 60 members rather than continually trying to add on. As a member who represents a constituency with a small population I suggest that the issues I consider day after day are just as numerous as those members of parliament who represent constituencies with larger populations. The only difference, I believe, is in the frequency with which we get responses to issues. But certainly everything that every other member has to handle as an issue I also have, even though the population of my constituency is small.

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What I suggest then is that because the number of issues is not larger but only the frequency of issues is greater, the hon. member for Pembina (Mr. Elzinga) struck the right chord when he said that members from larger constituencies should be granted a larger staff. I see nothing wrong with representing two hundred thousand people provided the member can still communicate with them adequately.

When we take a look at what has happened in the British House of Commons which presently has 638 members we find there what I am trying to point out, a real lack of participation by many members of parliament. Although there are those who participate actively, there is also a large number of members there who have become totally disinterested in their work for the obvious reason that they do not have sufficient opportunity to participate fully.

The second issue that I would like to raise for the consideration of this House, and perhaps as a recommendation to the commissions, is with regard to the whole area of conflict that has arisen and which will continue to arise in the future between rural and urban representation. When we consider the statement made by the Fathers of Confederation that this country should have representation by population, we must remember that the statement was made over 100 years ago when this country was nearly 90 per cent rural and the population was widely dispersed. The situation has changed of course, and continues to change rapidly.

The demographic projection for Canada for the year 2,000 is that 95 per cent of all Canadians will live in five cities, which would mean that if we continue the trend of only having representation by population, by the year 2,000, 95 per cent of the members in this Chamber will represent urban ridings from five cities. I suggest that that would be a grave mistake and it would not be in the grand interests of Canada and Canadians. I think it would be much more logical to take the view that when the Fathers of Confederation spoke about representation by population conditions were different then, and that in this day and