

Redistribution

days the redistribution discussion has been taking place is that the official opposition members must have lost confidence in themselves. In my own riding I gave up voluntarily—we did not wait to go before the committee—to the hon. member for Portage-Neepawa a strip 40 miles long and 6 miles wide, which is good for a Liberal majority of 300. That is almost as large an area as that which the hon. member for Lake Centre did so much talking about. I took an area almost the same size at the north end of my riding which had given a majority to the opposition party in the last election. I have no doubt that if I work hard enough I can get a substantial majority there.

I think hon. members opposite have been less than fair to the hon. member for Lake Centre, and I think he has been less than fair to himself in the deprecating attitude he has taken. There should be no doubt as to his ability to go out and win votes. I think the hon. member for Lake Centre could win any seat in Saskatchewan, and there was no need for all this ballyhoo simply because a little carving was done here or there.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Ward: Certainly it is all a matter of carving. Some four months ago a man in Saskatchewan, a good Conservative, told me that when distribution came up Lake Centre would be the seat that would have to go. I know the hon. member for Lake Centre knows this man. He said it was the logical seat to go. I think the hon. member is not fair with himself when he seems to think that he cannot go out and win that seat. Of course he can win it, just the same as the rest of us can win seats when we seem to be hurt in this redistribution.

It was apparent that two seats would have to go in Manitoba and three in Saskatchewan. Some of us in Manitoba got together before the committee met to see if we could decide on what would be the logical thing to do. I shall have to do some summerfallowing when I get back, just as the member for Lake Centre will have to do some summerfallowing.

Mr. Viau: Mr. Chairman, as chairman of the redistribution subcommittee in 1948 and this year I feel that I should give an explanation of what has happened in Manitoba. For the last few days members of the opposition have been talking about gerrymandering. We have heard the voice of the hon. member for Lake Centre, of the leader of the opposition, of the hon. member for Broadview and of other hon. members who have no knowledge whatsoever of the social, economic, political and racial questions involved in Manitoba. There

[Mr. Ward.]

was talk of gerrymandering in the province in 1948, and the present member for Portage-Neepawa represented the only seat that was then eliminated in Manitoba, which was a Liberal seat. In the redistribution of 1952 we are eliminating three seats in Manitoba; one Conservative, Souris; one C.C.F., Selkirk; and one Liberal, Norquay. The map will indicate how those three seats were eliminated.

A careful study was made of the rural and urban populations, the community of interests, and racial questions which are most important in Manitoba. It was found that the great urban area known as greater Winnipeg had to be used as the hub upon which the other ridings in Manitoba would be based. The subcommittee for Manitoba met and I asked representatives of the Conservative and C.C.F. parties to offer maps and suggestions. The hon. member for Souris presented a map and the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre offered some suggestions. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre was interested only in the greater Winnipeg area.

A careful study was made of the map presented by the hon. member for Souris, but he was concerned only with the western part of the province. In his map he had Souris, Brandon, Marquette, Dauphin, what was left of Portage-Neepawa and a corridor which extended from north to south that could be made into one riding. But he was not concerned with what happened to Provencher, St. Boniface, Springfield or the seats in the greater Winnipeg area.

On the other hand, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre presented a map which dealt with the greater Winnipeg area. After taking those two maps into consideration we arrived at the boundaries which are now part of this schedule. A few weeks ago the hon. member for Selkirk stated in Winnipeg that this was the worst gerrymander the province of Manitoba had seen since confederation. That statement was greatly exaggerated. The proof of that is in what we see tonight. The hon. member for Souris, representing the Conservative party, and the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, representing the C.C.F. party, both left the capital last night. I do not think the gerrymander could have been that severe in Manitoba.

We have eliminated three seats, one represented by each party. Souris, which was the smallest, was amalgamated with Brandon. In that way we were able to save one more seat for the rural population of Manitoba. In the redistribution of 1948 Manitoba lost two rural seats; this year one urban seat and one rural seat are taken out. I feel that