

*Electoral Boundaries Commission*

nowadays, that would presumably have been done before the election was held; I have not checked to see. However, I think it is clear that in the 1911 case the census had not been completed.

I pointed out last night that if the government had been seriously concerned about carrying out the pledge made by the Prime Minister in 1957, this legislation would have been introduced for the first time at least two years ago. I say this because when one is altering the pattern of 90 years and dealing with one of the most fundamental features of our constitution, the composition of this house, it is evident that no hasty action ought to be taken at a time which a lot of people may regard—though I have never said so—as being somewhere near the end of this parliament. These steps should have been taken in such time as to allow plenty of opportunity for appropriate consideration not only by the house but also by the public, whose servants we are, of this bill by virtue of which a fundamental and important departure is to be made.

The right course would have been to have introduced this legislation in 1960 at the latest, though not to have attempted to pass it in that year. As has been done with regard to many other important bills, it should have been left on the table for a year so the public might have given proper consideration to it. Then the government could have introduced the bill again in the following year, almost certainly in an amended form, and the matter could have been disposed of by this house and the other place.

I also pointed out that though of course the government has to take the initiative in this matter, first because the Prime Minister is the leader of the house and, second, because the expenditure of money is involved in connection with payment to a commission, the bill nevertheless should in no other respects be regarded as a government measure. We are dealing with a measure which is of no more concern, or should be of no more concern, to the government than it is to anyone else in the house. I am sure the Prime Minister will agree with that proposition, though he may not agree with many other of the things I say.

I maintain, therefore, that this resolution on which the proposed bill is to be founded should either have been introduced two years ago or, if it is to be introduced at this late date, that we should have an assurance from the Prime Minister that it is going to be effective and that unless some unforeseen crisis occurs it will be put into operation and the constitution complied with before a general election takes place. Otherwise the time of parliament is being taken wantonly and

unnecessarily in an attempt hastily to put legislation on the statute books which cannot come into operation until after there has been a general election, and which properly should be considered by a new parliament with a fresh mandate, not by a parliament in the kind of atmosphere which unfortunately has characterized far too much of this session.

**An hon. Member:** You want to go to the people now.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** The hon. gentleman seems to be very concerned about going to the people. I suggest we were sent here to do the business of the country in this house, and if we would spend our time doing the business of the country in this house in the way we have been sent to do it, instead of having all this agitation outside the house about an election, it would be very much more profitable. It would also be much more in accord with the correct way to conduct parliament.

**Mr. Jones:** Two flags and two election dates.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** The hon. member says "Two flags and two election dates". What we have had for the last three months is the spectacle of the Prime Minister of this country like a little girl among the flowers in a meadow in the summer picking the petals from a flower and saying "He loves me, he loves me not—shall we have an election, or shall we not?" For three months that performance has been going on all over Canada while the business of the country has been neglected.

I would draw the attention of the hon. member for Saskatoon to the fact that he provoked that irrelevant observation by his intervention.

**Mr. Jones:** I might tell the hon. member that he seems to have plenty of irrelevancies without my provoking them.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** I suggest, then, that if the hon. gentleman is worried about the number of my irrelevancies he should not provoke more. However, that is an aside. I want to go on and deal with this measure. Either this legislation is going to take effect and become operative, in which case I have no criticism to put forward, though I maintain it is being brought forward too late to be done properly, or the time of this parliament is being taken up unnecessarily with something that should be left over to the next parliament because it is not in fact going to come into operation during the life of this parliament and we have been told that urgent matters are being held up by the opposition. This is not the first measure of a hypothetical