

Redistribution

that my remarks do not apply to the ministers I see here today. We have the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Robichaud) and the Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys (Mr. Pepin) who are the two present today. Neither one of them at that time participated in those electoral campaigns. Nor, knowing their past, and knowing of them during the present, would they have done what was done by other members, had they been in a position of responsibility.

Mr. Pepin: Thank you.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I must extend my thanks to some hon. members opposite, because I had every intention not to be a candidate in the next election following the one in 1949. I had once been gerrymandered out of my seat by alterations that were made in it which were designed to assure that a socialist candidate would win that seat. That was done by the addition of large areas of overwhelmingly socialistic sentiment as expressed by their votes in the previous election. As a result I decided no longer to be a candidate. When my constituency of 1950-51 was so operated on, and subdivided, or trifurcated with bits and pieces put on here and there, I determined to return to my constituency of Prince Albert, where for many years a Conservative was not regarded as worthy of political support. Indeed, those were the days, and I say this for those young ministers I have referred to, and for others, when the only protection a Saskatchewan enjoyed in the province of Saskatchewan was under the provisions of the game laws.

Those things have all changed. As I say, I owe a deep and never to be forgotten debt to the Liberal government of those days for what it did. Otherwise I should not have found myself in the position of ultimately being prime minister, or indeed of having any reports on the prime minister's desk referring to my tenure of office, that were on that desk for a period of 14 to 16 months. That point is worthy of comment; but not worthy of approbation.

Having said that, may I now deal in particular with the concepts which moved all of us to accept the principle of a non-partisan, non-political approach to representation.

• (4:00 p.m.)

We have had experience of manipulating or gerrymandering, and we endeavoured to bring about a plan which would deny that unjustifiable sport of endeavouring to eliminate political opponents by altering political

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

boundaries. Commissions were set up. Originally the proposal was that the several provincial commissions should have one member named by the Prime Minister and another by the Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition. Objections were taken thereto, the legislation did not make much progress, and finally there was agreement that those two provisions should be eliminated.

In the province of Saskatchewan the commission was set up under the chairmanship of Mr. Justice Brownridge, together with Professor Ward and Mr. Koester, the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly. At no time was there any communication, directly, indirectly or at all with me or anyone on behalf of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, which had all 17 seats in the house, regarding various matters with which my hon. friend from Qu'Appelle (Mr. Hamilton) has dealt in such a masterful way. I have not heard anyone in this house consider in such detail and with such complete objectivity this complex subject in a way which, if carried into effect, would assure the basic principles of redistribution under the commission formula.

I was told by Mr. Castonguay that the first principle was to be this—that the cities were to have their representation determined, and from there on the number of seats found for the urban constituencies entitlement was to be subtracted from the total number of constituencies in the province in question, and then there was to be a reasonable division on the basis of population, provision being made for the tolerance of 25 per cent.

What has happened? In the province of Saskatchewan the commission departed from that principle. They started to divide up cities. The great city of Regina, with its large population, should have a member of its own to the extent of the quotient that is determined upon, consideration being given to the tolerance. So should the city of Saskatoon. But what did they do? They started in to tinker. They have set boundaries which have no basis in historical fact. They took Regina and divided it down Albert Street, as I understand it. They took Saskatoon and divided it by the river. Saskatoon is divided into two parts: If they had had two rivers there it would have been Gaul.

Why not give representation to Saskatoon and Regina in accordance with the principles which Mr. Castonguay told me were to be followed? I have no criticism about my own constituency of Prince Albert to which I shall