

*Electoral Boundaries Commission*

constituency of Mercier in Montreal has a population of some 250,000 odd, almost the same size as York-Scarborough.

These figures are not exact, but they illustrate the facts I am emphasizing. Manitoba has one constituency as low as 40,000 and another with a population as high as 116,000. Saskatchewan has one as low as 37,000 and another with a population as high as 95,000. These figures speak for themselves. They emphasize that not only is there not representation by population, because the scales appear to have been weighted heavily in favour of the rural areas, but also show that representation by population is not true of the city areas because there has been a tremendous influx of population into the suburban areas, and that is why members of parliament sometimes find they are representing as many as 200,000 people.

Now, I want to go into the principle for a few moments, and in doing so I wish to refer to section 51(1) of chapter 304 of the federal statutes, which is an amendment to the British North America Act, well known to the minister and other hon. members present. It outlines five rules. Basically there are 18,238,247 people in Canada; more than 18 million. The first thing you have to do is look at the rule. Section 51, subsection (1) says:

Subject as hereinafter provided, the number of members of the House of Commons shall be 263.

Looking at that, one would think there would be no problem at all. One could merely divide the 263 into the total population. But there are some safeguards which have been introduced in order to protect minority rights, and to protect those provinces where expansion has been slower than in the rest of Canada. Let us look at the formula we have today. We have what we call a Senate cushion; that is an expression I would coin in this regard. Under this arrangement there cannot be fewer members in the House of Commons from a province than there are senators from that province. I believe this rule is well known to the minister, but at this time I believe it would pay us to review the situation.

So the first thing to do is to subtract the members from those provinces which are affected by that arrangement. If you take 263 members as laid down by the act, you must then subtract the members representing the provinces to which I have referred. What are the provinces which would benefit under the redistribution proposals at the present time? I am informed they are New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island; the Yukon and the Northwest Territories are excluded anyhow, so we can forget about them. But there are ten in New Brunswick, four in Prince Edward

Island, one in the Yukon and one in the Northwest Territories. This adds up to 16. Deduct 16 from 263 and you arrive at the quotient, a figure which comes to 247.

Let me review briefly what I have said. The act calls for 263 members. We deduct the representation of those provinces which, because of their lower population due to a lack of expansion, cannot have fewer members than they have senators. This number amounts to 16, bearing in mind the Yukon and the Northwest Territories. We are then left with 247. Now, the population of Canada is 18 million in round figures. Next we take the population of New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, the Yukon and the Northwest Territories and we subtract the total from the 18 million. This gives us a figure of about 17.5 million people. Then in order to arrive at the quotient we divide this latter figure by 247 and we find that every constituency, if we could achieve perfect boundaries and true representation by population, would contain approximately 70,800 people. Now, there are in western Canada, as everyone knows, 24 senators; I believe there are six from each province. The rule which protects the maritimes against losing their representation and which excludes them from the strict rule of representation by population does not apply and has not applied to western Canada because our population has for a number of years been much higher than the floor provided. The safeguards which protect the maritimes certainly do not protect western Canada because I trust we shall always have more representation than six members from Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. In this regard one might say this afternoon, though I do not wish to press the point, that western Canada, in the absence of any other rules, has been discriminated against.

It would be interesting, I think, to put on record the degree of representation at the present time. Newfoundland, the new home of the minister, at the present time has seven members. Let us see what might happen under the formula which is before the committee now. Those seven members would be retained. Nova Scotia has 12 members and this number would be reduced to 11. Quebec has 75 members whose number might be reduced by one to 74. Ontario has at present 85 members and this province would gain three seats for a total of 88. So while Quebec would lose one, Ontario would gain three. Manitoba at the present time has 14 members and would lose one, its representation being reduced to 13. Saskatchewan would be the hardest hit. At the present time the province is represented by 17 members and it would