

Redistribution

should do what we can to inspire in the minds of our people confidence that representation by population is a reality as far as it can be carried forward under some accepted principles which recognize the difference between urban constituencies and rural constituencies in the concentration of population. But here, embedded in this act we are now asked to pass in its final stage, is every abuse that has ever been criticized in the past, and in some cases in the most iniquitous form. You cannot have an arbitrary equality of representation throughout the whole of Canada. There are geographical reasons; there are reasons of concentration of population, or otherwise. But there can be some clearly stated principles which would guide a redistribution committee of this House of Commons in reaching its decision.

How can it be said that there has been any principle guiding redistribution when you see urban constituencies in one case of around 40,000, and urban constituencies in another case of more than 90,000? How can one say that here is any principle applied when in one case we see a mixed rural and urban constituency with a little more than 30,000 and another mixed rural and urban constituency with approximately 90,000?

There has been no principle; there has been no guiding purpose apparent in the decisions reached as a result of the actions of the majority of the redistribution committee—except the old purpose of gerrymandering, to the advantage of the government.

Since this represents something that is not the privilege and prerogative of the members of parliament so much as it is the rights of the people themselves to proper representation in the House of Commons, I am about to move now an amendment for the purpose of providing an opportunity for further consideration of a method that would be more desirable. No harm will be done if there is delay in dealing with this measure, because we are going to meet again in November. Between now and that time steps can be taken to produce plans for redistribution which would be more satisfactory to the people of Canada, and effect some understandable principle which would at least give a pretence of representation by population in this country.

I therefore move, seconded by the hon. member for Eglinton (Mr. Fleming):

That the motion be amended by deleting the word "now" and adding the words "this day six months" at the end of the question.

Mr. M. J. Coldwell (Rosetown-Biggart): Mr. Speaker, I am going to be very brief because I think practically everything that could possibly be said in this connection has already

been said. The house in committee last night by an overwhelming voice decided that the schedule and the bill should remain substantially as it was when introduced.

I think however that the amendment of the leader of the opposition (Mr. Drew) is one that those of us who are critical of the schedule and the bill should support. I propose to vote for it when the vote is taken. I have held for a good many years that the method followed in carrying out redistribution by parliament is wrong, that unfortunately it means that members of the house are quite often called upon to think of their own prospects in subsequent elections rather than the representation of the people of Canada on a sound and proper basis.

When I look at the map of my own province of Saskatchewan I can only conclude that there has been something of a gerrymander. That is the word that has been used, and I find it a most convenient word to use at the moment. I feel particularly that the city of Regina, which was my home for a good many years, has been treated unfairly. It is true that the parts of the city that are now in Lake Centre were in Lake Centre or in Moose Jaw or in Qu'Appelle years ago.

But times have changed and the city has grown. About a year ago, if my memory serves me correctly, the boundaries of the city were enlarged, when a provincial act took into the city those heavily populated suburban areas that had been built up. It is a city which in thirty years has grown from 26,000 to about 72,000, I believe it is. Today, by this redistribution, some 5,000 or 6,000 Regina citizens, now included in the urban area of Regina as well as those in the newer suburbs, are being placed outside that city, in a constituency which will be dominated by another city, that of Moose Jaw.

To my mind that is indefensible. I do not believe the people of Moose Jaw will endeavour to gain any advantage over Regina, or to persuade their member, when elected, that he should fight for any advantage over the city of Regina; but I think it is most unwise to place a large number of citizens of Regina in a constituency that is either dominated by another city, or is substantially rural.

Last night I could not vote for the amendment offered by the hon. member for Eglinton (Mr. Fleming) to transfer that portion of the city of Regina and its suburbs, now included in Lake Centre, into the rural constituency of Qu'Appelle. I think that would have been equally wrong. My contention is that the limits of the city of Regina should be the limits of the constituency. There are 66,500 people now in that seat. By enlarging