

*Electoral Boundaries*

according to the last census, had a population of 666 in 1971 and which became one of the main tourist resorts in North America, would remain as before in the riding of Shefford because it is 6 miles away from Granby, which is presently the most progressive industrial town on the south shore.

However it is reluctantly that I would accept decision of the commission which, according to the proposal under debate, wants the electors of Bromont to be transferred to the riding of Brome-Missisquoi, because I would not like the commission to think I am against every change it has proposed for the riding of Shefford.

I should now like, Mr. Speaker, to comment on the changes or possible increases in the population of those five ridings, which will be felt at the next federal election and might substantially change the statistics relating to the population as compared to the last census. I would therefore like to proceed riding after riding and analyze those possible shifts in the population, based on the figures of the last census and on the proposal I made earlier, which I would ask the members of the commission to examine and accept. As I suggested, the last census of 1971 gave the riding of Sherbrooke 84,595 people. However, given the increase in Sherbrooke's population since 1971, that riding will still be the one among the five which will have the greatest population. I think it should have at least 100,000 inhabitants at the next federal election.

According to my forecast and the latest 1971 census, the Shefford riding will have about 79,000 people and I contend it will rank second out of the five with a population of 85,000 when the next federal election comes up.

Also according to my forecast and the latest census, the Richmond riding will come third, if not second, with 80,000 or perhaps 85,000 population, due to the substantial increase in the number of Black Forest residents which will be felt on the next federal electoral rolls, since there are at present over 1500 family dwellings being built for the year 1976 only. The same increase is expected for the two following years, which means the Richmond riding will have a better population balance compared with the other ridings concerned, and it would also help reduce the present population discrepancy between Richmond and its closest neighbour Sherbrooke, as I pointed out in my remarks tonight. According to my forecast and the latest census, the 68,932 population of Saint-Hyacinthe will increase substantially by the next federal elections, particularly in view of the development of the towns of Douville and Sainte-Rosalie which are situated on the outskirts of Saint-Hyacinthe, which means Saint-Hyacinthe will have at least 78,000 people by the time of the next federal election.

● (2350)

Under the proposal of the commission to which I do not suggest any change, I believe that Drummond will be the last of the five ridings with a population of about 75,000. In summary, according to the last census and my own estimation, Sherbrooke which now has 84,595 residents would be home to at least 100,000 people at the next federal election. The population of the riding of Shefford, now 78,379, would be 85,000; the population of the riding of Richmond, now 71,842, would go up from 80,000 to 85,000 or may be more; the population of Saint-Hyacinthe, now 68,932, would be

78,000 and that of Drummond, now 68,109, could reach 75,000.

Mr. Speaker, those are logical comments. They are mainly statistics, taking into account better representation for all constituencies in the area and also taking into account the five ridings which would not have any important change but would have a better balanced population, than they did in the federal election of 1974. Then we had the riding of Sherbrooke, and the riding of Richmond, with a difference of 25,000 constituents. Simply by making the minor changes I suggested tonight, we could have five ridings in the Eastern Township without altering the boundaries proposed by the commission for a better redistribution within the boundaries of those five ridings.

Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis): Mr. Speaker, my remarks will be very short because it is already very late. I should like simply to meditate publicly and to have the members of this House pondering with me over the problems which the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Commission for the province of Quebec must have met, as also must have the Electoral boundaries Readjustment Commissions for the other provinces. I shall address myself more specifically to the one I know best, the one for the province of Quebec. And I think that, for the sake of objectivity, we must congratulate the commissioners for carrying out their very difficult task with such gusto. I mean, Mr. Speaker, that the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Commission for the province of Quebec, as undoubtedly the commissions for the other provinces, had a very hard job to do and had been given specific terms of reference by the House of Commons. The commissioners could not in any way take into account, for instance, population projections for the future. They had to base their decisions exclusively on the 1971 census. It is on the other hand what caused the problems. I am inclined to believe, after having listened carefully to representations which have been put forward since yesterday, that many members in the House were a little mislead when they asked the judges to follow criteria not allowed by the act, that is taking into consideration developments to come relating to the distribution they had performed. For example, I recall the statement made earlier by the hon. member for Shefford (Mr. Rondeau) when he said: there are five ridings in my area, so why not have an equal number of constituents in those ridings? But the terms of reference of the commission is clear, or at least it seems clear to me.

For the commission must take into consideration geography and also entities it has to analyze. For instance, when it is said that Sherbrooke should be like the riding of Richmond, I say it is unfair to compare those two ridings like that.

As everyone knows, Sherbrooke is an urban riding, while Richmond is a rural riding. I suggest it is in agreement with the spirit of the law passed by the House to ask the commissioners to keep in mind in their discussions that a rural riding must have fewer people than an urban riding. That is provided for and they took that into account. They have submitted a report in that respect, which I find reasonable.

I must say that these are only examples. I could give many more; for instance when it is said that Rock Forest in