

went on it was felt that the two parties should have a fair share of redistribution. When we came to the time of Sir Wilfrid himself, and afterwards Mackenzie King, this distribution had been shared between the parties, and as a result of the good feelings between the parties, Mr. Mackenzie King, in 1934 I think it was, and later on in the forties, had one of the smallest constituencies in Canada, the constituency of Glengarry which by all normal rules for constituencies should have been wiped out, or could very well have been covered or encompassed in some other constituency. But in the house it was Mr. John MacNicol, a leading Tory from Toronto, who moved that the constituency should be left untouched. That is an indication that the parties were agreed, by a kind of chivalrous agreement, to divide the constituencies among themselves.

As time went on the conviction grew throughout the country that redistributions were not for the benefit of the particular persons or parties, but for the electors. And so we have come to the point now where the general opinion in the country is that the electors must have a fair deal rather than any particularly popular leader or political party. The electors must have equal representation or the nearest thing to it.

I know my honourable friend, Senator O'Leary (Carleton), was at one time a candidate in the county of Gaspé which at that time contained within its boundaries the Madeleine Islands. I do not know whether during the course of his campaign he had time to go there, although it was an important part of the Gaspé constituency.

Over half a century ago, in 1912, I went to the Madeleine Islands in connection with a provincial by-election. Perhaps there has been a change since then, but at that time there was every reason for making it a separate constituency. It had no connection whatever with the Province of Quebec. Religiously—and they are very religious people there—the population was under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Charlottetown. They were miles away from anywhere. There were no airplanes at that time. You could not get there at all during the wintertime, as far as I know. Commercially, the Madeleine Islands belonged to Newfoundland years ago, and the property was owned by a British admiral and his descendants in Montreal. In trade, such as it was, importing was carried on from Halifax, and it was mostly liquor—and not very good liquor at that, as well I know. The export trade was with an American concern from Gloucester in the United States which purchased all the cod, lobster and herring. There was no sound reason why the Madeleine

Islands should belong to Canada at all, as far as I know. Their interests were entirely different.

I also remember that at that time in Quebec we talked during the campaign about James Bay, and we might as well have talked about the Uganda railroad, as far as these people were concerned. There was a question of a Canadian navy, and most of the population of Quebec were against it. But these people, being surrounded by the sea, felt they would like nothing better than to get jobs in a navy.

I know that to two or three redistribution committees the Madeleine Islands posed a problem. They did not want to belong to Gaspé, and with all due respect to the "Madeleineos," Gaspé did not want them either. There was a suggestion that they should be joined to Bonaventure but that did not go. There was also a suggestion, because they had similar trading habits and interests to those of the people of the north shore of the St. Lawrence where many people were fishermen, that the islands should be joined to Saguenay, several hundred miles away. There was no geographical connection whatever but merely some similarity of interests.

It is very well to say there are great discrepancies, but where are you with a situation like the Madeleines? That is one of the problems which one of the commissions will have to settle, and frankly I would not like to have to do it.

Hon. Mr. Brooks: I would suggest that Prince Edward Island take them over.

Hon. Mr. Power: I remember before the war you could only get to the Madeleines by taking a Canadian National train to Pictou and then by boat to Prince Edward Island and to the Madeleines. Now you can get there by air.

As I said, this is one of the difficulties that will face this commission and one which it will have to settle satisfactorily. It is my hope that they will find some means of doing it to the satisfaction of some of the people.

Most of the questions that have been asked I cannot answer except by telling you a story about something else. I do not think I have anything further to say with respect to this bill, honourable senators, but I should like to point out for purposes of information only, that the Manitoba legislation dealing with the division of the province into electoral constituencies provided that that work was to be carried out by a commission composed of the Chief Justice of Manitoba, the President of the University of Manitoba and the Chief Electoral Officer of the province. The report of that commission, except for one single exception, was adopted, and received general acclaim. I mention this to indicate that this sort of thing has been done, and successfully done, at least once in Canada.