

Redistribution

the views of their supporters in their ridings. I am expressing the view of those members of the New Democratic Party who live at present in the riding of Okanagan-Revelstoke and in the riding of Kootenay East, and I think their views are supported by a great majority of community organizations of various types, whether they be trade union organizations, women's institutes, farmers' institutions, and so on.

I think it is also quite correct to say that hon. members who have spoken this afternoon were voicing the opinions of people in their districts regardless of party, as a result of getting their reactions to the report of the commission. Personally, the people I have spoken to are very concerned at the creation of this new riding, this Okanagan-Kootenay riding, which changes the complexion of Okanagan-Revelstoke and of Kootenay East.

I speak with some personal experience on this question because I have lived in the interior of B.C. for approximately 60 years. I know the geography of the interior. I know the history of the development of that portion of B.C. for that period. I know the circumstances that prevail in every large and small community within that area. I am very closely acquainted with all these questions. I know the economies of the areas concerned. I know the past developments and the developments that are anticipated in the days ahead. With that knowledge, related to the opinion of many persons who have given this subject consideration, I think I can speak with some authority on the question.

We are to have this new monstrosity known as Okanagan-Kootenay which attempts to combine historically speaking in the form of one political riding two races never on speaking terms with one another. There is to be a giant horseshoe around Kootenay West and, as the hon. member for Okanagan-Revelstoke (Mr. Johnston) mentioned, it is a form of Pakistan, with the populous end in one portion of the riding, the other concentration of population in the other end, and a large horseshoe of smaller communities joining them.

Mr. Barnett: May I ask the hon. member a question?

Mr. Herridge: Certainly.

Mr. Barnett: I am wondering if the hon. member for Kootenay West (Mr. Herridge) is implying that we should establish a new bicultural commission to look into the situation?

[Mr. Herridge.]

Mr. Herridge: No, Mr. Speaker, that would not be necessary because the riding has been settled by some splendid people of British and other stocks and some French Canadians who came from Quebec to work in the woods. That question was settled years ago.

My second complaint is that there is no community of interest between the two ends of this riding. At one end we have persons interested in mining, particularly coal mining and metalliferous mining, and where there is some ranching.

● (3:10 p.m.)

At the other end we find the major interest in the fruit growing industry. There is no community of interest and, as expressed throughout the years by chambers of commerce and other organizations which represent the people in those areas, the local problems facing the people of the Okanagan-Revelstoke area are entirely different from those faced by the people of Kootenay East.

As pointed out by the hon. member for Kamloops, the new riding will be very difficult to serve. An individual living at one end of it will have to make a round trip of 800 miles in order to see his member. I do not suggest that all constituents travel in order to see their member; it is the habit of all hon. members of this house to visit their constituents. But this has become very difficult in the past few years because we find ourselves here at parliament ten months of the year. In my own case I have had constituents who, knowing I was only going to be home for two or three days, have travelled 300 or 400 miles to come to my ranch to see me about their problems. This new riding will be very difficult to serve, particularly during the winter when one is likely to run into heavy snowstorms and other weather conditions that make travel difficult.

All political parties depend upon organization. If it were not for the satisfactory organization of political parties we would not have a democracy. Neither would we have the opportunity to come here and present our views and differ from one another, while at the same time respecting the rights and opinions of the minorities. This new riding is going to make it very difficult for those who wish to organize political parties, because of the circumstances I have mentioned and those pointed out by the hon. member for Okanagan-Revelstoke (Mr. Johnston).