

*Electoral Boundaries*

this year. It will again be some time before the results of that census can be reflected.

● (1730)

I can only say I hope the commission will do its job and not make any substantial changes from this point on. There is no question that boundaries, wherever drawn, will always create problems. There is some difference of opinion between myself, as the member for Ottawa West, and my colleague who represents the adjacent riding of Ottawa Centre. I believe my colleague has added his name to those who are making objection to redistribution. Unfortunately, he is not able to attend this afternoon.

Briefly, the objection concerned my easterly boundary and his westerly boundary. The proposal placed before the House not long ago by the commission would have created an easterly boundary for Ottawa West following Fisher Avenue, Carling, along Holland Avenue to the Queensway, and easterly along the Queensway a distance of one mile to the point of intersection with the Canadian Pacific Railway track. That, to my mind, was a good boundary. It reflected the social and cultural characteristics of the community. In the latest proposal, the commission has seen fit to make a modest change. They have extended the boundary along Holland Avenue northerly to Wellington Street and then easterly along Wellington Street to the point of intersection with the CP railway track. This change splits a well-known and historic parish in two—the Parish of St. Francis. It is situated on the south side of Wellington Street and covers a fairly substantial area.

It is my opinion there is no further logical boundary to be considered other than that contained in the most recent proposal. When we cross Wellington Street, the language changes; the district becomes generally French-speaking. The parish of Notre Dame des Anges, north of Scott Street, is more recent than the parish of St. Francis and serves a large part of that community. On balance, it is my hope that the commission will not make any further changes in this boundary. I do not believe they could come up with more logical or more consistent proposals.

There is a point at which we must face the fact that redistribution does not represent one of the more glorious efforts of parliament. It is, in a way, an embarrassment to all of us who are concerned. The act of redistribution has contributed the word gerrymandering to our vocabulary. It was not very long ago that boundaries assumed the outlines, as it were, of strange or fictitious animals. I hope the commission will get on with its job. Although the boundaries are not the ones I would have chosen, I, personally, find that on balance they make as much sense and are as logical and I hope they will not be changed further by the commission.

Mr. Blais: Mr. Speaker—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McCleave): Is the hon. member rising on a point of order?

Mr. Blais: No, Mr. Speaker. I was wishing to take part in the debate and I was under the impression I was next on your list.

[Mr. Francis.]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McCleave): My position is a difficult one when there is so much enthusiasm around. The Chair is doing its best to co-operate with the whips of the various parties. The hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River (Mr. Reid).

Mr. John Reid (Kenora-Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, the enthusiasm with which members participate in this debate is understandable. I wish to speak briefly about some of the problems we have in northern Ontario in connection with the decision of the commission to reduce the number of seats there from 12 to 11.

We thought in 1965, when the former commission came out with its recommendation to increase the number of seats from 11 to 12, that northwestern and northeastern Ontario had been recognized for the growing and developing areas they are. I might point out that considerable distortions were created as a result of the addition of that seat in the traditional pattern of representation which had existed until that time. I must admit there was some grumbling about this distortion. Nonetheless, it was accepted, and as things turned out the new seat proved to be a tremendous addition, giving representation to areas which had not been as well represented in the past because they had been tied in with people living in city ridings, and those living in the rural areas felt their interests had taken second place. So we were shocked to find that northern Ontario would lose one seat in the new redistribution proposals.

Consequently, the Liberal members from northern Ontario came together to work out a map, and that map was presented by the hon. member for Thunder Bay (Mr. Penner) to the commissioners when they held their meeting in Thunder Bay. To demonstrate that it was possible to do things in another way, the northern Ontario members drew up a second map. This time we showed it to members of other parties who came from northwestern Ontario and obtained their agreement that it did provide a way of getting a twelfth seat for northern Ontario, although they did not commit themselves to the particular boundaries which were drawn on that map. It was my pleasure to present that map to the commissioners at the meeting in Sudbury. I might say I also attended the meeting held at Thunder Bay and had spoken there, too, on the need for 12 seats in northern Ontario. So we showed the commission two ways in which it could accomplish our goal of keeping northern Ontario's representation at 12 seats.

We thought this was not unreasonable, because as a result of the changes which had taken place in the number of seats in parliament there would be an increase of seven seats in Ontario and it was not an unreasonable thought that this would provide sufficient flexibility to enable the commission to allocate the extra seat to us or continue the 12 seats. In addition, the House of Commons had passed a private member's bill which gave primacy to the need for keeping rural seats up to date by removing the necessity for the commission to take cognizance of growth patterns in the suburban areas of cities.

We thought the combination of those two factors would provide the opportunity for the 12 seats to be retained. We recognize that if there is to be a twelfth seat, there must be distortion, there must be changes in the normal pattern of redistribution. Nonetheless, the geographical dimensions