

Redistribution Commission

the number of members of the House of Commons should be decreased, owing to the time being wasted, often on account of empty speeches, higher allowances should be provided for those members or candidates who have to travel longer distances during their electoral campaigns.

A travelling allowance could be provided for candidates or members for large ridings like those of the prairie provinces, for instance, so that there would be no disparity between them and members for urban constituencies.

Mr. Choquette: There is not a penny left in the hon. member's campaign fund.

Mr. Chapdelaine: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate that it would be more appropriate to make such a proposal when the house is discussing the Canada Elections Act, but I feel that it is relevant to the question under consideration.

Be that as it may, Mr. Chairman, I still say that the debate on the resolution is a waste of time for the taxpayers, for the house and for everyone. The sooner it is over the better it will be.

[Text]

Mr. Baldwin: I appreciate the generous invitation of the Secretary of State which, as I understood it, constituted a suggestion that all members who had some contribution to make or some suggestions to advance should, either at this stage or on second reading, give the committee or the house the benefit of their views. That statement removed any doubt I had felt about speaking at this time. As a matter of fact, I think that at this stage we are far less cribbed and confined than we are on second reading, despite the fact that the Secretary of State did hold out the hope—and I think we can take it at its face value—that the government would not be too strict in its interpretation of the rules and would be prepared to consider meeting reasonable suggestions and making amendments at that time.

Like the previous speaker I feel that on a subject as important as this it is not only the right but the duty of every member to make his views known. I should like to have seen the range of our discussion on this particular measure broadened to include expressions of opinion by those who sit opposite and support the government. I hope that before this resolution passes we shall have the benefit of their wisdom. I say this because here we have an opportunity, on behalf of our constituents, who are even more vitally concerned with the results of this measure than are the individual members of this committee, to make known the views of those who elected us. If we have been good members we probably know by

now what the people in our constituencies feel about this measure. Now we have an opportunity to put those views on record. Not only will the government be able to hear and read them in due course, but the tribunal itself will, I hope, in the discharge of its task, turn to this debate and to the debates which follow to learn how the people of Canada wish these problems of redistribution to be handled.

I am in accord with what has been said by my hon. friend from Brandon-Souris, by my leader and others, that it is of the essence that the tribunal to be established should be composed in part of people who are or have been high court judges. I do not wish to go into the subject to any great extent because I think everything that could usefully be said has been said. But I think it is undoubtedly a fact that men who have been partisan and prejudiced in political life, upon taking the judge's oath and ascending to the bench have, in almost every instance I can think of, put to one side their preconceived prejudices and views and have discharged the duties which have been cast upon them without regard to the views they may have held in the past. For that reason I think it would be most useful to have as at least a considerable element in this tribunal some people who have held judicial office.

I think that all of us bring to this particular problem some of the views we have elicited as a result of our own particular circumstances in the constituency or the area of which we have particular knowledge. I do not think it would be amiss for me to give very briefly some of my views which have been generated as a result of my own experience in a constituency vast in size and covering more than one third of the province of Alberta but which has a population of approximately 80,000 people. I can say that my remarks tonight are objective. Nothing that can be done within the limits of what has been suggested would in any way hurt my constituency or do damage to it, so I hope my remarks will be considered to be generally objective.

The constituency of Peace River extends from the westerly boundary of the Canadian shield to the eastern slopes of the Rockies and from the 55th parallel to the 60th parallel. The population is scattered throughout the constituency, not like many northern constituencies where the largest number of people are to be found in the southern areas of those constituencies. In this case they are to be found in all parts of the constituency. When I go home during recesses it takes me two months to two months and a half to cover the constituency adequately and attempt to give that service to the people