

returning officers have been asked to get in touch with the parties that ran one and two in those constituencies to the end that enumerators can be named. That is most indicative of the degree to which this House is going to be kept in session in order to pass various bills that are apparently going to be brought in, and it would lead one to believe, coupled with the directions being given to the returning officers, that an election is close at hand.

I see the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEacohen) smiling with the smile that indicates that probably what I am stating is well based. When the President of the Privy Council smiles, he brings us all together in agreement. That has been the secret of his success as the singular member of the government charged with the responsibility of making the House work.

● (1650)

So we face an election. We also face, as has been pointed out over and over again, a serious falling away of the population of certain provinces and areas in our country. Although this is not the time or place to do so in detail, let me mention what has happened in Saskatchewan. I took it upon myself to look into that matter. According to my information, the population of Saskatchewan, if migrations proceed at their present rate, by 1981 will be approximately 2,100 more than it was in 1961. In other words, what is happening in those provinces—in this connection Saskatchewan is one example and Manitoba is another, although the degree of diminution of population in that province is not as great as the degree of diminution in Saskatchewan—is an indication that more and more we are becoming an urbanized country.

I listened with interest to the hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Knight) and with many of the things he expressed I am in agreement. However, I want to make it perfectly clear that I do not agree with his idea that the committee for Saskatchewan which looked at electoral boundaries of constituencies did a good job. In point of fact, it is difficult to understand the tinkering that was done by the commission headed by the hon. Mr. Justice Brownridge. I am going to mention my own constituency as an example. For a while it looked, in view of the degree to which Prince Albert now extends 18 miles south of Saskatoon, as if the Minister of Justice (Mr. Lang) and I might be opposing candidates in the next election. Now, with what has been done by this bill, that possibility has been eliminated. But it would have been a wonderful battle. I was rather looking forward to it. I see the President of the Privy Council smiling. Yes, I was really looking forward to that battle.

As far as the province of Saskatchewan is concerned, it is obvious that in drafting certain of the boundaries the commission under Mr. Justice Brownridge had political considerations in mind. Indeed, in order to add to the population of one constituency he found it necessary to deduct therefrom about 18,000, and then to run that constituency south many, many miles to a point far removed from the centre of the constituency. It was a political job. It was a gerrymander. And I can recognize a gerrymander, Sir, because I experienced that twice in Lake Centre. The third time that part of the constituency was wiped out by being divided five ways. I always bow when I hear the name of the Right Hon. J. G. Gardiner. But for him I

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would have never become prime minister because I did not intend to run in the election of 1952. But when they took my constituency and wiped it out finally, having tried twice previously to jimmy-mander it, I decided that I would run in Prince Albert where for many, many years only a Liberal had been elected, with the exception of one socialist.

The day of the gerrymander is over, at least officially. The action of the provincial commission in Saskatchewan leads me to believe that the chairman of that commission had some ambition for a higher judicial appointment. Having given him a most generous reference, let me say that I think that what is being done here is a step forward. Of course, I cannot visualize the House of Commons without the President of the Privy Council and I cannot imagine his constituency being wiped out. To me, that was ground enough for the assurance that there would be action on the part of the government in bringing forward legislation which would remove the possibility of a catastrophe such as the minister's not being a candidate in the constituency that he has represented for so long.

As far as the bill is concerned, I give it my support, because if it had been brought in any other way I would have found it necessary to raise strong objections to its constitutionality. There is nothing, as I see it, that would make this parliament postpone the facing of this issue, and that is what we are doing. In so far as it affects the western provinces, this bill is one of the first steps along the road to reform. The need for reform has suddenly stricken the heart of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) in preparation for his meeting the representatives of western Canada. No doubt this is the first step toward the economic conference that will begin in Calgary within the next couple of weeks. Before I sit down, let me direct these remarks to the acting prime minister of the moment. He should warn the Minister of Justice from now on not to make attacks on provincial premiers of western Canada, because what he has done in recent days in that connection would almost lead one to believe that he decided to torpedo the conference in advance.

What is being done now is just a step for the purpose of bringing about equity within this country. "Rep by pop" is a fine phrase. I listened with great interest to the hon. member for Scarborough East (Mr. Stackhouse) reviewing history. I read all the debates that took place between 1841 and 1867. However, representation by population cannot be preserved within this country if confederation is to be maintained. We and other areas outside of the cities would be wiped out and our people would be virtually without that representation to which they have a right.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. It being five o'clock, the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper, namely, public bills.