

Redistribution

Those people who for years and years have worked in the riding of Vancouver-Burrard, which is to be eliminated, are entitled to go into a new riding on the same footing and with the same status as anyone else. But I am afraid—perhaps this is very minor politics—that those people who have worked for the four political parties in the riding which is going out of existence will have to go into the new political organization as newcomers and deal with those who have been working in Vancouver Centre. If a new name were used I think this would be avoided. I see no reason in the world why the commissioners should not have accepted the recommendation made and agreed to by both parties. That is all I wish to say with regard to my own riding, Mr. Speaker, and I shall now deal generally with ridings with which I personally have no connection.

The hon. member for Kamloops has detailed many of the objections with regard to what the commissioners have done in the interior regions of British Columbia. I concur in what he has said in this respect. British Columbia is geographically a very difficult province for members to represent because of its mountains, rivers and very vast areas. No matter how you draw the electoral boundaries in British Columbia you will have difficult ridings. But it seems to me that whereas we have at the moment two ridings that are difficult for a member of parliament to represent and wherein communication back and forth is difficult, as a result of the work of the commissioners we will have four, if not five, difficult ridings.

I would hope that the commissioners in reviewing their work will get us back to the situation where at most we have only two difficult ridings. As the hon. member for Kamloops pointed out, it is essential that a member of parliament be able to serve his riding properly, that he be able to get about his riding and that the people within the riding be able to get to him to discuss their problems. I think this will be almost impossible in the proposed ridings of Coast-Chilcotin and Okanagan-Kootenay.

We in British Columbia particularly are a long way from the national capital. Our M.P.'s have to spend most of their time in Ottawa because of the long sittings of the house. It is essential therefore that during the periods we are able to get home as many constituents as possible should be able to see us in order to tell us what they need in the area and bring us up to date on the growth and

[Mr. Basford.]

development of the area. I suggest this will be very difficult in ridings such as Coast-Chilcotin and Okanagan-Kootenay.

I wish that one of the commissioners at some period in his life had served as a member of parliament. Had any of the commissioners served as a member of parliament I think they would have had a greater appreciation of those things the hon. member for Kamloops and I are talking about. I suggest that if the member for Coast-Chilcotin, for example, went home for an Easter recess, which would mean he would arrive home on the Thursday before Good Friday and leave a week later, it would be utterly impossible, no matter how much he tried, to get around that riding and visit the various communities within it. If we are to create ridings such as Coast-Chilcotin I hope parliament will authorize the purchase by members of parliament of airplanes, boats, helicopters and horses, because that is certainly what any member of parliament will need to serve the riding of Coast-Chilcotin.

Mr. Aiken: We will have to put horses on the payroll again.

● (2:20 p.m.)

Mr. Basford: It is essential, it seems to me, that ridings should be designed so the parties within them can organize effective political organizations. We as politicians, and even the political scientists, urge members of the public to take an interest in politics and involve themselves in the subject. It is essential, it seems to me, for the health of this country that in each riding the various parties have healthy, vigorous political organizations, nominating candidates, fighting elections vigorously and enthusiastically and, within their own party structures, putting forward policies and principles for consideration both provincially and federally.

I ask the commissioners to consider whether in a riding like Coast-Chilcotin or Okanagan-Kootenay it would be possible for any political party, be it Liberal, Conservative or New Democratic, to organize an effective political organization. I ask each of the commissioners, when they are doing their work, to imagine themselves to be president of the Coast-Chilcotin Liberal organization, the Coast-Chilcotin Conservative organization or the Coast-Chilcotin New Democratic Party organization and faced with the problem of trying to organize a nominating convention. He is going to have to bring candidates to that nominating convention across three