

*Electoral Boundaries*

community of interest between those areas of York County and Northumberland County.

The orientation of the people who live in that part of York County is toward Fredericton. It is not toward the Chatham-Newcastle area, which is the commercial centre of the riding of Northumberland-Miramichi. I have discussed this privately with the Hon. Member for York-Sunbury before the debate today. We both agreed that it would be a mistake to change the boundary in the way the Commission proposed. The distances which those people would have to travel to visit the constituency office located in Newcastle are extreme in terms of New Brunswick. I agree that it does not always have to be located there, but it is the centre of the riding and that part of the riding where the largest possible number of people can telephone the riding office without being required to make long distance telephone calls. As I said, the distances these people would have to travel are extreme in terms of New Brunswick. They may not be extreme in terms of Labrador, the Northwest Territories, northern Ontario, the northern prairie Provinces or British Columbia, but we are not debating those circumstances. We are debating electoral boundary changes in New Brunswick. It seems to me that that is what the focus should be on and that is how the commissioners should have proceeded to do their job.

I do not know where they got the idea from that there is a community of interest between the areas they are proposing to add to Northumberland-Miramichi and the Miramichi area. That community of interest just does not exist. Of course there are interests in common. The ancestry of the people is a common interest. The life style of the various communities would be very common from those areas of York County to the parishes of Ludlow, Blissfield and Blackville in Northumberland County, but The Fact remains that their orientation is toward Fredericton, not toward Chatham-Newcastle.

To add that much territory to the constituency of Northumberland-Miramichi without a significant change in population makes no sense electorally, geographically, socially or commercially. Therefore, it should not be pursued. However, I agree with one suggestion of the Commission. At least, I will not protest it, that is, the name change of the constituency which I now have the honour to represent. If it is changed to Miramichi, that is fine with me. Miramichi encompasses more than Northumberland County itself. The Miramichi River system is probably the most diverse river system in New Brunswick. Of course it is famous the world over for its production of Atlantic salmon. No river in the world compares with it in that respect. Because it already has two parishes of Kent County in it, I favour the change of name if that is how it comes out in the final analysis. I am not proposing that change myself, but I will not protest it.

For those reasons, I wanted the opportunity today to protest. When the Commission held hearings, as usually happens in New Brunswick the Miramichi region was not on its list of areas in which to hold hearings. As usual, we were lumped in with either the Bathurst region or the Moncton region. We are a region unto ourselves, encompassing about a tenth of New

Brunswick. It is high time that was recognized by all Government institutions at both levels.

**Mr. Jack Murta (Lisgar):** Mr. Speaker, at the outset I would like to make one observation, that is, that the electoral boundaries commissioners did what I think most Manitobans would consider to be a reasonably good job in terms of outlining the changes to the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act in the Province of Manitoba, with the major exception of the constituency of Portage-Marquette. The concern which has developed in the Province of Manitoba over the constituency of Portage-Marquette has been for two reasons. The first is the name change, which most people in the area do not feel is warranted, and the other is a boundary change. Both are not large items. Both can certainly be accommodated when the Electoral Boundaries Commission meet again to review the report. If this were done, certainly it would meet with everyone's satisfaction.

The Hon. Member for Portage-Marquette (Mr. Mayer) has spoken at length on the subject and has expressed his concern. I would also like to do so today, basically on behalf of many people in the province of Manitoba. In suggesting that the name of Portage-Marquette be changed to Portage-Minnedosa, the Commission is ignoring a proud tradition in that part of Manitoba. To give you just a little background, Marquette was one of the original ridings in Manitoba when Manitoba entered Confederation. There were approximately four or five original constituencies, Marquette being one, Provencher being another, Lisgar being another, and there were one or two others. History goes back to the days of Sir John A. Macdonald who represented Marquette very briefly. Arthur Meighan represented the constituency of Portage, which is encompassed in the total name change of this constituency. History goes back a long period of time for that part of what is considered south central or south western Manitoba.

• (1250)

The Commission proposed to change the name of the constituency from Portage-Marquette to Portage-Minnedosa, ignoring the cultural and historical ties that bind the two names together. Instead of taking into account the very important historical factors which originated the name Portage-Marquette—and I have described probably the most important of those factors—the Commission has decided to replace the name of Portage-Marquette with the names of two large communities in the riding, that of Portage La Prairie, or Portage, and Minnedosa.

First, this name change is unacceptable as far as the constituents of that area are concerned, and it is unacceptable generally to the Province and to the people in the Province of Manitoba. If we cannot follow our historical pattern in these changes, then perhaps one should not be making the changes that are contemplated at all.

Second, the Commission changed the northern boundary of the constituency, thus ignoring the geographic factors which tie the communities of Russell, Onanole, Rossburn, Vista, Wasagaming, Binscarth to the rest of the riding. These are all