

used in this debate also because there was some fundamental ignorance of some of the basic principles of what representation in Canada means. I call it ignorance, or a failure to take heed of what it means to represent people both from the point of view of the electorate and from the point of view of the elected member of parliament, just like the editorial which appeared in yesterday's *Globe and Mail*. It reads very well on paper, within the confines of a comfortable chair in the editorial offices of that or any other newspaper, but I suggest to such an editorial writer and to the political scientists who have written reams and spoken volumes about redistribution and the value of the one man-one vote principle, that in all of this so-called neutrality the loser is the elector. Confusion is created by arbitrary changes that disregard community of interest, that make a mish-mash of traditional well recognized boundaries within cities and in rural areas.

In the province of Alberta there has been a complete reversal of the traditional principle that I, as a city member, insist should apply, namely, that there be a preponderance in the number of voters in an urban constituency over those in a rural constituency. I say that urban constituencies in my province should have a considerably higher average than the rural constituencies. A good rule of thumb is six urban to four rural voters. But just look at what has happened. On the basis of the 1971 census there are nine rural constituencies with a total population of 786,099, or an average of 87,344, whereas the total urban constituency population as proposed is 841,775 for ten constituencies, or an average of 84,177. And when you move within the urban constituencies, for some unknown reason the corporate part of the city of Calgary was given five seats, taking it down to an average of 80,665, or 7,000 people less than the average rural constituency.

The city of Edmonton is just about even in numbers with the rural constituencies. This ends up in an assumption that I and my colleagues from Alberta refuse to accept, that it is inevitable that rural constituencies must decline both relatively and directly. I do not accept that. We know that metropolitan areas are growing, but on the other hand in the province of Alberta the government there is seeing to it that the populations in rural constituencies are being maintained.

I come to another matter. The cities are divided off within their present corporate boundaries, ignoring completely the metropolitan development that is taking place on their peripheries. The net result is that we have two doughnut constituencies around the cities of Edmonton and Calgary. Both those neighbouring constituencies should be rural, but the net result of the redistribution is that they are both dominated by fringe city areas. I do not want to deal in particular with the riding of Pembina, adjacent to Edmonton, because my colleague who represents it will probably be speaking about it, but it is dominated by three dormitory suburbs just a few miles outside the city. As a matter of fact, some of them are almost contiguous to the city. Yet it is supposed to be a rural constituency.

The people in the fringe areas have a community of interest within the city, and not outside in the rural areas. They work in the cities. Their children attend schools in the cities. If they were included in the urban constituen-

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cies then we could have essentially rural constituencies of a much more manageable nature, getting away from some of the oddball boundaries that have now been drawn. I would like to take each member of an electoral boundaries commission and sentence him to serve some of these constituencies for two years—I would send a newspaperman with him also—to see just how difficult is the job.

There is further injustice so far as the member of parliament is concerned, on the basis of this so-called neutral distribution which has emerged from I do not know what theories, in that all members are paid on the same basis both as to expenses and salary. But many of the rural members have a terrible load on their shoulders with regard to expenditures. They have tremendously awkward constituencies, as a result of what in effect is gerrymandering by lack of appreciation of the real factors that go to determine what should be the best district for an elected member to represent, and to represent the people in it best.

The electors are not mere ciphers. Yet those who show an ignorance of the tolerance features in the act, of the demographic principles that should apply, and who insist more and more on the mathematical formula are those who consider that citizens are mere ciphers. So far as the province of Alberta is concerned, with respect to some of the constituencies the results might have been just the same if they had taken a census of gophers. They would have given just as much consideration to the boundaries for them as to the boundaries for people.

I could go on and on and give any number of reasons why these proposed redistributions are in error and why in the case of Alberta, the commissioners should go back to square one and start all over again. Many excellent briefs were presented. I am particularly disappointed that the commissioners said that these briefs, 99½ per cent of which were highly critical of the methods used, reinforced the opinions and decisions of the commissioners. It was an exercise in total futility for the people who were effected. The only people who seem to matter are four men and their opinions, and everybody must conform. I think that is wrong.

● (1730)

I would say in conclusion that the sooner this House gets back to re-examination of the acts on constituency redistribution and to providing that there shall be reasons given and that those reasons be debated here, the better. It is not a case that we are going to imprint our own reasons. Since we have no right of vote, we cannot make the changes ourselves. Rather than this so-called laundered type of mutual redistribution commission there would be far more intelligence, far more fair play and less frustration if the commissions were composed of a chairman and representatives appointed with the approval of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) and the redistribution commissioner—people who have some knowledge of political representation, the difficulties of it and the needs of the electors. We always get somebody who has had very little, if any, exposure to those factors and the results show it.

The last time we had any debate about it, it was all critical debate. This time every province calls the redistri-