

Redistribution

think that the boundary between Haldimand and Lincoln at the present time is like the Alps or the Rocky mountains, that one could hardly pass from one constituency to the other. We will omit all that. Second was the effect of erosion in lake Erie. That struck me as having no more to do with it than the flowers that bloom in the spring. Indeed I was left with the feeling that if the hon. member for Lincoln has to resort to this utterly unconvincing argument against the obvious justice of taking part of Lincoln and adding it to Haldimand, thereby preserving a historic riding, our sense of fairness and common sense is leaving us.

Mr. Hees: Mr. Chairman, I make no apology at all for rising to speak on behalf of the hon. member for Haldimand, because I believe that when you speak on behalf of such an excellent member of parliament, it is time well spent. Nothing said this afternoon by the hon. member for Lincoln makes me believe that five townships in Lincoln cannot be just as well represented in this house by the hon. member for Haldimand as by himself, well though he may be representing them at the present time. The riding of Lincoln now has 90,000 people, which is too many for one member to properly represent, no matter how able he may be. I am not detracting at all from the hon. member for Lincoln, but I think he would be able to do a better job for 70,000 people if 20,000 were added to Haldimand.

Yesterday evening, the Minister of Agriculture referred in generous terms to both the former member for Haldimand, and the present member for Haldimand. He said they were men whom he had marvelled at. That was a most generous comment on his part, and one that was well justified by the present member for Haldimand. I believe that, with his ability to serve his constituents, which I have been able to observe during the past two years, being his roommate, he would be able to serve these additional five townships in an excellent manner. I think it is most important that we in this house do everything we can to see that really first-class members of parliament are not eliminated, as will be the case in connection with Haldimand.

We have put forward some sensible and practical suggestions for the retention of this seat. Granted, it is too small at the present time; but we have suggested adding five townships from Lincoln, which would then make the ridings of Lincoln and Haldimand a sensible size. I think the suggestions we have made are sensible and practical.

I hope this committee is not simply going to follow the routine of having these suggestions put forward, and then giving them no

[Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood).]

consideration whatsoever, as appears to be the situation now. Amendments are put forward, but they are not considered. Members stand up and the ridings are lopped off.

I would hope that, even at this late stage, when the riding of Haldimand comes up for consideration, the committee will restore the confidence of the people and increase their belief that fair play is still possible in this House of Commons.

Mr. Fleming: Mr. Chairman, I should like to deal with some of the points raised by the chairman of the Ontario subcommittee, the hon. member for Ottawa West. I shall base my position on this item squarely on the facts of the situation. I am not simply making an appeal to sentiment; I am dealing with the situation on the facts. The recommendation of the majority on that committee is going to work a great distortion in representation in the province of Ontario, not only in this case but in other areas within the province.

As the hon. member for Ottawa West has said, the effect of the proposal made by the official opposition in this respect would be to have one more seat in this particular area. Under the recommendation of the majority of the committee the representation in this area is to be narrowed down to three ridings whereas we propose four. That is quite right. The hon. member for Ottawa West says it will be necessary to eliminate a seat elsewhere. Of course that follows.

In committee we made several suggestions as to what could be done in that respect, suggestions that had much greater justice than what is proposed with respect to the narrowing of this area into three ridings.

Mr. Mutch: For the benefit of those who were not on the committee, would the hon. member like to tell us what were the alternative suggestions?

Mr. Fleming: The hon. member will hear about them in due course. He will have the whole story. All he needs to do is to follow what I said before and also what will be said at a later stage and he will then see precisely what is suggested. These were discussed at some considerable length in the committee. The hon. member can get the whole story from the hon. member for Ottawa West who is sitting beside him.

Mr. Mutch: I think you would prefer to speak for yourself.

Mr. Fleming: The hon. member will find out all he needs to know on any of these matters. I shall be happy indeed to discuss any of these questions with him.

I have always understood the purpose of redistribution to be to arrive at equalization