

I for one am opposed to increasing the number of members for the city of Montreal where there are already too many. I see the hon. Postmaster General (Mr. Ouellet) in his seat and he too knows very well that there are too many members. Some members are very active and one member in Montreal can work ten times more than a member of a rural riding because he does not have to travel. He has his office in town. The hon. member for Saint-Denis (Mr. Prud'homme) nods in approval. That is true. One can represent 150,000 constituents in the city of Montreal, but not in a rural riding.

If we compare federal and provincial ridings, we can see that there are four provincial constituencies in our region, while there are only two federal ridings.

Mr. Prud'homme: They have secretaries.

Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue): As the hon. member for Saint-Denis just said, all provincial members have secretaries who are paid by the government.

Mr. Prud'homme: They also have offices.

Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue): They have offices, expense accounts, everything to serve their constituents. In Ottawa, on the contrary, they want to play politics with that. Every member of Parliament needs some services in his riding, but nobody dares stand up and ask for them. They are real hypocrites!

Mr. Prud'homme: They sit four days a week, four months a year!

Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, much could be said about it. I think the hon. member for Saint-Denis is getting to like Social Credit.

An hon. Member: That makes sense.

Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, this afternoon at least he has some common sense.

I am told that the National Assembly in Quebec sits four days a week and at the most four to five months a year. There is a difference with what is being done here. One should note, by the way, that the parliamentary allowance for the members in Quebec is superior to that of federal members of Parliament.

An hon. Member: Disgusting!

Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue): I hope this will appear in the official report.

Mr. Speaker, I think that the process of readjusting federal electoral boundaries should take into account the needs of rural citizens so that they may get the best possible services. I see that my friends from the New Democratic Party are applauding, and with reason. When I visit in Saskatchewan the riding of Rosetown-Biggan in the north of the province, around Saskatoon, or in the south in Ponteix or Regina or in Gravelbourg, I realize that hon. members there have huge ridings which they must crisscross, while in the cities, all the constituents are practically on the spot. One meets his constituents on street corners, as I was saying a little earlier. In large

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cities like Vancouver, a member has to walk only three blocks to meet all the people of his riding.

I therefore believe that we should take our time, study the situation in depth and refrain from moving hasty amendments which mean nothing. Instead of seeing the act come into effect or having us continue discussing it on January 1, 1975, we should discuss it before July 1, 1974. It seems to me that if there is an idiotic argument, that is one. This proposal makes no sense. We are not in such a hurry. These are the same people who say: Let's end the session and go on holidays. But when it is time to go, they move amendments like that. This afternoon has been wasted, completely wasted. We could have undertaken the study of those bills which have to be passed before we adjourn for the summer. For example, the Olympic Games bill for Montreal. Why did we not start on it this afternoon? Because once again there is—

An hon. Member: There is blackmail!

Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue): Yes, there is a bit of blackmail in that. In fact, we are told that that legislation must pass before recess. But there is something else too. We are warned that there will be no adjournment now if we refuse to promise to restrict the debate on capital punishment in the fall.

Mr. Speaker, in the fall the debate on capital punishment will perhaps last three days and maybe even twelve or fifteen days. It is up to hon. members. We have neither to compromise nor to get involved in that connection. They should drop it now if they intend to reintroduce it in the fall. If they do not want to discuss it immediately, as I would hope, let us wait till the fall. But between now and then, let us finish the business before the House.

There is no need to discuss the electoral boundaries all afternoon, as well as tomorrow and Monday. If Progressive Conservative members were bright enough to withdraw their amendment and say: "Well, we could discuss this when we return next fall", we should not have to determine whether we shall examine again this bill before January 1, 1975 or July 1, 1974.

Personally, I am fully against this amendment. Instead, let us take the time necessary to review the situation so as to increase especially the urban representation throughout Canada. Moreover, let us make sure that the number of constituencies will not drop more in Quebec than in Prince Edward Island or New Brunswick. And if we must increase the representation in some areas, let us not abolish existing constituencies in others.

This is my suggestion. Let us maintain present boundaries and create new constituencies, because some of them are already too large. For instance, it should be proper for Saskatchewan to send three more hon. members to the House of Commons. This would relieve and help the population of Saskatchewan.

But if more members of Parliament are needed in Ontario, let us add them. If ten members are needed, let us give ten to Ontario, but to do so, we do not have to take some from Quebec, from Saskatchewan, from Alberta, from Manitoba or from New Brunswick.

An hon. Member: That is true.