

Redistribution Commission

take care of this situation that I would say affects at least 10 and maybe 15 or 20 ridings in the country. It was always easy for me to be sympathetic to the hon. member for York-Scarborough in the last few years, knowing the huge population problem there, and this sympathy, of course, becomes especially strong at election time. But I put it to the hon. member that the main thing we should be concerned about is not so much election time but servicing, looking after and understanding the interests of the people of one's riding. These interests are not only in terms of people but are a physical thing. I suggest that the physical problems in looking after a riding of over 100,000 square miles, with a population of over 50,000, are even more difficult than the physical problems in looking after one of the very large city ridings.

Mr. Moreau: Will the hon. member permit a question? Is he aware that I proposed a formula this afternoon which would take into account land area for those ridings mentioned in schedule III of the Canada Elections Act?

Mr. Fisher: I did not hear it. I meant to listen but I was called out. I appreciate that that suggestion was made. I missed it but I will certainly look at it. This is one area that needs serious consideration. One of the things that bothers me about the kind of consideration you get is that I think there will be impatience among many members to whom this kind of thing does not matter, because they are not involved with this type of constituency. I put it to the Secretary of State that he knows how ineffective members from such constituencies have been in trying to make their arguments to the C.B.C. in order to get television and radio service in many cases.

Mr. Pickersgill: As a matter of fact, on that particular point I might say that the hon. member for Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador has done exceedingly well. He is getting radio service almost immediately at Wabush and Labrador city but I admit it has taken him about three years to do it. I am sure he will be glad of the advertisement.

Mr. Fisher: The Secretary of State is probably conscious of the question I have on the order paper in relation to this very matter. On this particular point, I should like to show the Secretary of State a few letters I have had from people in the Wabush area that do not express quite so much satisfaction in regard to this particular matter. They have pointed out they have been clamouring for three or four years now, and I just raised the question in order to support the

[Mr. Fisher.]

hon. member for Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador because this is a problem we all have.

Mr. Pickersgill: But the decision has already been made.

Mr. Fisher: Yes, but they still have not got television service. What are you going to do about that? The minister may take a great deal of comfort from the radio coverage—

Mr. Pickersgill: May I answer that? The hon. gentleman has succeeded in doing what no one else has succeeded in doing in this debate, and he has got under my skin. What I intend to do about that is to say publicly—I do not know that the C.B.C. agrees with me and I am sure that a lot of private television people do not—that we should have single coverage all over Canada before we worry about alternate service.

Mr. Fisher: This example is a good one. In so far as getting under the minister's skin is concerned, I may say I was talking today to a gentleman who was forced to observe the proceedings of the house yesterday. He said, "When you arrived back in town, did you smell the incense burning, the perfume, and as you came to your seat did you hear the sweet tinkling of bells?" He said that yesterday was one of the sweetest, stickiest and stinkiest days he had ever seen in the House of Commons. I gather that partisanship just disappeared and pleasantries reigned.

Well, I come back to my point. When you represent this kind of constituency, which is a relatively small portion of the total number of constituencies, when these constituencies are scattered all along the northern fringe of Canada, when they do not have powerful means of communication in terms of newspapers, television stations or the kind of pressure groups that count, it is very difficult to develop the kind of sympathy and understanding that you often need from governments and from bureaucrats. I want to make the point that it is extremely difficult—I have made it too often now—to represent a constituency that runs to this particular size.

Now, there were one or two smaller points that I wanted to mention. I wonder if the Secretary of State or any members of the cabinet, have talked at all with New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia, the three provinces protected by the senate floor, and which are going to be protected by the senate floor, in order to get their views on the relationship of the number of seats they hold as a right from confederation, as against the intention that has been mooted that there will be an increase in the number of seats. There is a double-edged problem in