

Redistribution

the session, natural perhaps, that matters should be rushed through. This is much too important a matter, not only for the present but for the future, to receive precipitate treatment.

Mr. Abbott: Hear, hear.

Mr. Fleming: I venture to urge upon the house that nothing will be lost if the sovereign public is permitted to understand fully what is involved in this bill. That desirable purpose can be achieved if the government will permit the bill to stand. It would be very much better, of course, if in the meantime the government would refer this bill, indeed the whole question of redistribution generally, to a redistribution commission.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have intimated before that I intend to allow no discussion as to whether or not redistribution should be referred to a commission.

Mr. Fleming: I was not proposing to discuss the question of a commission. All I intended to say was that there is time to allow—I say no more than that—there is time between now and the reconvening of this house on November 20 to permit this matter to be reviewed by a commission. There is no argument on the basis of time against that being done. Even if the government does not see fit to use the services of such a body for that purpose—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member is continuing his argument, and I would ask him not to do so.

Mr. Fleming:—then, at least the government ought to allow this measure to stand until the house reassembles. What is going to be lost by doing that, by giving the public in all parts of the country an opportunity to know what will be the boundaries of the constituencies in which every member of the public will be casting his vote at the next general election? What harm can there be in it? The only reason that there could possibly be for denying that simple and obvious request for justice and fair play would be that the government realizes that this bill contains iniquitous provisions which will have the effect of gerrymandering, as we have said. They want to get this deed done as quickly as possible. You remember, Mr. Speaker, the words from Macbeth:

If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly;

That, I think, is probably the mind of the government at the moment in trying to push this through. I asked my genial friend the Minister of Public Works last night just before adjournment, when he spoke of third reading of this bill:

[Mr. Fleming.]

You are not going to let it stand until November 20?

The minister said, "I do not think we could do that."

Mr. Fournier (Hull): After listening to you, we have to go ahead now.

Mr. Fleming: Mr. Speaker, that is simply the measure of perversity of the government mind.

Mr. Fournier (Hull): On a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member thinks I am perverse, he is quite wrong.

Mr. Fleming: Perhaps I should withdraw the imputation that the government has a mind, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Sinclair: Just say we are completely bored.

Mr. Fleming: Back of the haste in this matter is undoubtedly the hope of the government that the nefarious deed that they are proposing to perpetrate now will be forgotten between now and the next general election. If the view of the Minister of Finance is correct that the public does not care, it is easy enough for the government to conclude the public will forget. The longer you give the public to forget, so apparently runs government thinking, the less likely they are to recall such a nefarious and iniquitous thing as is being perpetrated in this bill. Mr. Speaker, there can be no argument whatever for pressing through right now in the last days of the session, when the house is under great pressure,—

Mr. Sinclair: Hear, hear; air pressure.

Mr. Fleming:—a measure of this kind which, of all kinds of measure, ought to have deliberate consideration in this house and throughout the country. The schedule to this bill reached this house in printed form only on Monday of this week, June 30, after indeed many members had gone home thinking that the session was practically ended. Surely this is no way for the House of Commons to discharge its supreme responsibility to the public. If the government will not accede to a simple and reasonable request that this bill be allowed to stand until the house reconvenes on November 20, then in the interests of justice and in deference to our duty to the public who are supreme, there is nothing that can be done now except to support the motion that this bill be given the six months' hoist.

Some hon. Members: Question.

Mr. G. J. McIlraith (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, believing that the public are supreme, and lest they may be misled by some of the things they may read in *Hansard*