

Redistribution

Mr. Graydon: Mr. Chairman, last night I took occasion to make my position clear with respect to several members in this party who were experiencing serious redistribution troubles. I wish now to say a word about the difficulties in which my very close friend in the C.C.F. party, the hon. member for Selkirk, finds himself. He was very modest this evening when describing his position, I must say.

One of the things that have caused me most concern in connection with the redistribution now taking place has been the constituency of Selkirk. I took occasion to look into the position that the Manitoba subcommittee had arranged for him and found that when the explosion had cleared away, his constituency had been blown into seven pieces. He is now in the position of having his constituency represented by seven members, rather than by one as at present. It seems to me that to pick on the hon. member for Selkirk in this way, to apply the guillotine to him, is not fair.

Mr. Mutch: You are crying louder than he did.

Mr. Graydon: And I am not going to take any advice from across the way from any of the experts on guillotining, because it seems to me that if we must take advice it should come from quarters that have shown more equity and fairness.

This seems to have been the practice throughout the proceedings of the Manitoba subcommittee. The hon. member for Selkirk was as highly regarded as any member in any party; and certainly, so far as I am concerned, he stands high in my estimation. I would feel remiss in my duty tonight if I were to let this occasion pass, even though I belong to a different political party, without raising my voice in protest against this type of butchery of a riding into seven segments. I speak on behalf of a close personal friend who in my view did not get a square deal in the redistribution that has taken place.

Mr. Ward: Mr. Chairman, I am sure if the hon. member for Peel had known what he was talking about he would not have said anything on this issue. Had the hon. member for Eglinton known something about the history of Souris he would not have spoken as he did.

Mr. Murray (Cariboo): They should stay in Ontario.

Mr. Ward: Going back a little, all hon. members will know that the constituency of Selkirk was created in 1947 out of a conglomeration of little patches here and there, little

subdivisions of Winnipeg. At that time there was room for Selkirk, for that additional constituency. But up to now not one member of the official opposition has told us what we should do about the two seats that had to go. They have not taken that into consideration at all, and they took the very same stand with regard to Saskatchewan.

In the last thirty years I have taken part in three redistributions in the House of Commons. I believe the fairest and most equitable is the one now being made. It has been done without regard to partisanship and has been carried through on a basis of sheer logic. I will challenge anyone to prove the contrary.

Coming back to the constituency of Souris, I am sure that had the hon. member for Eglinton known that in 1947 there were only 23,000 people in that constituency he would have realized that it was the logical seat to eliminate at that time. It was the Liberals of that day who saved Souris; and yet no one on the opposition side of the house has said that, though some of them know it. I repeat that it was the Liberals who saved Souris in 1947.

The Liberals decided at that time that it should be saved, because the hon. member for Souris was the only Conservative member from Manitoba at that time. I know the Prime Minister expressed the desire that it be retained, and I know that one of the most distinguished and most capable members in the house gave up his seat in favour of that constituency.

We come now to 1952; and perhaps it will interest hon. members when I tell them that the hon. member for Souris told me that he expected his seat would go. He told me two or three months ago that he did not expect his seat would be saved. He said it was the smallest in Manitoba, and when two seats had to disappear it was only logical in his view that Souris, with only 25,000 in it, would be one of them. It was the easiest seat to dispose of because of its geographical location.

Taking the whole picture of Manitoba I would say that if one looks at the highways going up and down he will see that the job of redistribution was well done. And in this connection I wish to give the hon. member for St. Boniface great credit for the excellent job he did in dividing the seats in the province. As chairman of our group his actions were most logical.

While I am on my feet I should like to add a further word. We gain impressions from discussions that take place in the house. One of the impressions I have had during the