

Redistribution Commission

am sure we can work out an acceptable, fair and equitable solution to the whole problem.

It seems to me that we must face up to the fact that the house no longer reflects the make-up of our nation through its elected representatives. The shift in population from rural to urban, which has accelerated very rapidly in recent years, has resulted in very serious inequities in representation in the house. These inequities are well known, and it is not my intention to dwell upon them at length. However, it might be useful to make a few comparisons by way of example of what really has happened since 1952. I am going to compare the rural and urban situations, rather than getting into other complicated factors such as constitutional guarantees and so on. In fact, I intend to stick within my own province of Ontario to indicate how the situation has got quite out of hand.

The constituency of Grey-Bruce has a population of approximately 36,000 people, and they elect one member to this house. On the other hand, the constituency of York-Scarborough, which I have the honour to represent, had a population according to the 1961 census of 267,000 people. Now, this is a ratio of one to seven. Surely, the first consideration of responsible government is representation by population. I am equally certain, Mr. Chairman, that a man with the capabilities of the hon. member for Grey-Bruce is capable of looking after twice as many people. I am sure, for that reason, we will probably not hear very much objection from him.

When I was coming into the chamber, someone told me that there was a total of 280,000 farmers in the whole of western Canada. The population of my constituency has increased since 1961 and I now have more people than the total number of farmers in western Canada. I hasten to add that I realize I am comparing nuts and bolts, or something to that effect, and I do not expect my remarks to be taken too seriously.

Mr. Fane: Nobody will.

Mr. Moreau: Much has been made in the debate so far about the difficulties of campaigning in large rural or sparsely populated ridings. I can assure hon. members that the difficulties of organizing a campaign in a riding like York-Scarborough, which in the last election had 643 polls, are equally great. I can assure hon. members also that the difficulties of serving such a populous riding after being elected are literally impossible.

The Leader of the Opposition indicated yesterday that he favoured a one third

tolerance from the average representation per constituency, and he went on to point out the difficulty of communicating with constituents in a very large riding. As the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre has said, the difficulties envisaged at the time of confederation in connection with this question have been dissipated by the improved channels of communication and methods of travel. However, I think we have to recognize the special situation of those far northern constituencies such as Churchill, Saguenay and so on. Mr. Castonguay has reported to us that in Australia they make a 20 per cent tolerance work very well indeed, in spite of the fact that the differences in population density in that country are similar to our own, where the development is largely a ribbon development along the sea coast, with vast stretches in the interior that are sparsely populated. The situation in Canada, therefore, is not so different from that in Australia.

In spite of the fact that I represent an urban riding not too far from Ottawa, I find that because of parliamentary duties, the hours of sitting and so on, my constituents must, for the most part, communicate with me by mail. Indeed, a great number of them have complained already that I am never available in my riding. I suggest, Mr. Chairman, that since the members must be in Ottawa in any case, and since mail and telephone services are not very different in most constituencies, whether they be rural or urban—with the exception of the northern ridings—we have virtually the same problems. Our constituents really must communicate with us for the most part by mail. I suggest, Mr. Chairman, that the members of the committee should consider seriously the adoption of the 20 per cent formula.

I suggest we could make special provisions for those constituencies outlined in schedule III of the elections act. For the benefit of those members who are not familiar with this schedule, I would indicate that in the province of Ontario we would have the constituencies of Cochrane, Kenora-Rainy River and Port Arthur. In the province of Quebec, we would have the constituencies of Chapeau and Saguenay. In the province of Newfoundland we would have the constituencies of Bonavista-Twillingate, Burin-Burgeo, Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador, Humber-St. George and Trinity-Conception. In Manitoba, we would have the constituency of Churchill. In the province of Saskatchewan, we would have the constituencies of Mackenzie, Meadow Lake and Prince Albert. In the province of Alberta, we would have the constituencies of Athabasca, Jasper-Edson and Peace River. In the province of British Columbia, we would have the constituencies

[Mr. Moreau.]