

Electoral Boundaries Commission

do not know. Yet, if he is to be the co-ordinator his views are going to carry a great deal of weight with the provincial commissions. I just wonder whether this is perhaps the wisest method. If he is in doubt himself, is he going to come to the Minister of Transport for advice because he has no means of consulting with all of us here?

Mr. Pickersgill: No, sir.

Mr. Churchill: If the reports I have heard are correct, for example, and some people have mentioned them in the house, the maps are already prepared for every constituency in Canada and every constituency is going to be altered, or nearly every one. I suggest immediately that is the wrong approach. If commissioners coming fresh to the job are going to be presented with maps showing the divisions within their province based strictly on the representation by population principle, which is the only one upon which maps could be drawn, the commission will start off on a wrong tangent.

Perhaps there is another approach. I do not know what is in the mind of the commissioner who is going to be the co-ordinator. I think the approach should be from the known to the related unknown; that is, to take the constituencies as they are, you see how closely they come to the quotient that is set and you leave unchanged just as many as you can because of the historic associations with so many of our constituencies. Then, you gradually work your way to the point where you approach the quotient for your province, but at the same time taking into account whatever tolerance is permitted. Of course, my view of that is that there should be a wide discretion in the hands of the commission.

It is a little disturbing if the representation commissioner is to be the co-ordinator, and perhaps if this is so the representation commissioner should meet with some committee of this house so that we know what is in his mind before he starts on his travels.

Mr. Pickersgill: I think the hon. gentleman asked me a question at the beginning of his remarks, and I should like to answer it. I seem to have created a misapprehension in his mind. I suggest that he look at clause 7 of the bill which indicates quite clearly that all four commissioners have an equal voice at any meeting. If there should be a draw it would not be the representation commissioner but the chairman of the commission who would be the judge who would have to decide on the vote. In using the word "co-ordinator", I had in mind that it would be possible for the representation commissioner to suggest what one commission was doing with a view

to keeping the uniformity which the hon. member for Bow River and others suggested would be desirable. As I understand it, if we enact the bill setting up these independent commissions, none of us is going to try to tell the commission what to do, beyond the rules we lay down in the bill itself. I am sure they will all read these debates, at least I hope they will. Beyond that, none of us is going to try and tell them how to do this job. We are going to try and establish a procedure in this bill for getting the best possible commissioners and then trust them to do what parliament intends them to do within the limits parliament has laid down.

Mr. Knowles: As the Minister of Transport indicated a few moments ago, Mr. Chairman, there is some attractiveness to the proposition advanced by the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre, namely that it would be desirable to have only one commission. There is something that looks rather tidy about that, and I think we all understand the motives of the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre in advancing this proposition. However, this is a subject upon which there has been a good deal of thought by all of us, and we, in the New Democratic party feel that it would be preferable to have a separate commission to do the job in each province.

I am not going to take the time to go over all the arguments. They have been made and they have been answered. It seems to me that the argument that one commission would be more economical than ten is countered by the fact that one commission would have to do much more work and therefore require much more staff. Any suggestion that it would be simpler is also offset by the obligation of having a staff that would have to work in the various provinces.

It seems to me that the overriding argument is this. After we have established this commission we want the job of redistribution to be as satisfactory as it can be to the people of Canada, and that means to the people of the areas affected. I am sure the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre and I would be met with some strong feelings on the part of the Manitoba people if the boundaries in Manitoba were drawn by a commission, based at Ottawa, that would not have on it people who belong to Manitoba. I think in the case of Manitoba, and this applies to all the rest of the provinces, we will get a more satisfactory job done. We will get recognition of the local conditions, geographical, topographical, sociological and all the rest, much better if we have a commission for each province. Therefore this is simply to reaffirm the position we have taken in the past and to say, having thought the matter over, that