

*Redistribution*

from that point of view but I wish to say something with regard to the effect of what has been done.

No matter who has been to blame in the past, we are again confronted with the criticism which has been raised on every occasion in the past when redistribution has taken place. From what was quoted both by the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration (Mr. Harris) and by myself during the debate yesterday, it is obvious that it is not only here in this House of Commons in Canada that strong and forceful terms are used to apply to the result of methods which do not seem to produce a result that is in the interests of the people generally. Nevertheless it is at all times the duty of members to direct the attention of this house to the possibility of improvement. If we were simply to say that we are following the course that has been followed on earlier occasions—that although it is true there has been criticism, the criticism has been directed to both sides and consequently nothing need be done—there would not be any necessity for debate and we would not have much improvement in this or any other case. In view of the statement made by the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) at the time that this measure was introduced, many of us had hoped that a different approach was going to be made to this subject on this occasion. Again yesterday afternoon the Prime Minister made a statement that would have produced a result different from the one we have before us; that is, if the principles he enunciated in that statement had in fact guided the majority of the redistribution committee or the provincial subcommittees.

By the result of majority decisions there has been barefaced gerrymandering under the act now before us. There has been gerrymandering in the very way that has been described on earlier occasions. In order to deny to sitting members the opportunity in the future to represent the people whom they have served in the past constituencies have been joined when that joining was not necessary. Under the definition given by the predecessor of the present Prime Minister, namely the late William Lyon Mackenzie King, the most obvious type of gerrymandering is the combining of two constituencies represented by members of the opposing party for the purpose of denying to one of them the right to return to the House of Commons after the next election.

Another form of gerrymandering described by the same gentleman was that which detaches from an existing riding areas which have been inclined to give constant support

to the party in power, for the purpose of bolstering another riding with votes which may be counted upon or which the government may expect will follow the same course in the future.

Another form of gerrymandering is the taking of a constituency represented by a member of the opposing parties—and usually it is done in the case of the most prominent members of the opposing parties—and so distorting the boundaries of it that the organization of that constituency in a way that gives an interpretation of the wishes of the people becomes extremely difficult.

We have had the three types of gerrymandering in this case. We have had the first type of gerrymandering, that of the joining of seats, in a number of cases in order to deny to members now sitting in this house the opportunity of returning after the next election, because one of two members must give way to the other under the necessities of the result of this redistribution.

Then we have seen the detachment of townships and areas that appear to have followed a course that would suggest the likelihood that they would support the government and in that way bolster adjoining constituencies. Then we have seen the most abominable type of gerrymandering in the case of the constituency of Lake Centre for an obvious purpose. These acts of gerrymandering are there before us; and no protestations of high purpose will deny the result that is before our eyes.

This matter has been referred to in varying terms but one quotation that was read into the record yesterday from a speech of one of the greatest parliamentarians of our generation—I refer to Right Hon. Winston Churchill—emphasized the necessity at this particular time, no matter what may have occurred at any time in the past, of establishing public confidence in our system of representation of the people in the House of Commons. As he pointed out, this is a time to make sure that we do not in any way imitate the methods that we are criticizing so severely in those areas now behind the iron curtain. Abuse of government power is bad at any time, but it is particularly bad at a time when one of the great issues before us is to restrain the power of government. Freedom from excessive government power is really the fundamental issue between us and the dictatorships on the other side of the iron curtain. For that very reason, by every gesture we can make, by every practical demonstration that we can give of our own desire to see that the representation of the people is carried out in the most impartial manner possible, we