

Redistribution

matter for us in the house. Whether or not the public understand the unfortunate loss of time—

Mr. Abbott: Take all the time you like. Don't hurry.

Mr. Mutch: The hon. gentleman is showing more imagination than he ever did before.

Mr. Abbott: I merely indicated that the public were not interested in my hon. friend's remarks.

Mr. Fleming: See how the Minister of Finance is squirming.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Fleming: He would give his eyeteeth right now to be able to take back that statement.

Mr. Gardiner: You ought to be practising law in a police court.

Mr. Fleming: The fact remains that the Minister of Finance said that the public does not care. That is his estimate of the attitude of the public—

Mr. Abbott: And the hon. member for Eglinton.

Mr. Fleming:—and the degree of concern of the public as to the responsibility of the representatives the people elect to represent them in this sovereign House of Commons.

Mr. Mutch: Public votes do that.

Mr. Abbott: They do that by their votes.

Mr. Fleming: That is the view of the Minister of Finance. Those of us who sit in the opposition have a very different conception of the responsibility this house owes to the people.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Fleming: In our view the people are supreme.

Mr. Mutch: Would it be unparliamentary to say "nuts"?

Mr. Fleming: The people should have the final authority in this matter.

Mr. Laing: They will.

Mr. Stuart (Charlotte): Did you have the same view in 1933?

Mr. Fleming: No one will find that out sooner than the hon. member for Vancouver South. I want to say—

Mr. Mutch: Must you?

Mr. Fleming:—that under these conditions, particularly in view of the startling confession by the Minister of Finance—

An hon. Member: Sing it to music.

[Mr. Fleming.]

Mr. Fleming:—that there can be no excuse for or palliation of what the government now proposes to do in rushing this through—

An hon. Member: Who is rushing?

Mr. Fleming:—before the public has a chance to fully understand and realize what is being done here in the way of gerrymandering, "jimmymandering" and all the other kinds of mandering being perpetrated by the government.

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Chairman, I think there are one or two comments that should be added to what has been said by the hon. member for Eglinton. It is interesting to observe that this debate is serving the very useful purpose—

An hon. Member: It isn't a debate.

Mr. Fulton:—of revealing clearly for the first time the attitude of the government toward this whole program—toward what is being done, and toward the public and the House of Commons of Canada. I know my hon. friends on the government side of the house do not like us to take any time.

Mr. Stuart (Charlotte): We are not complaining.

Mr. Mutch: Take all you want, chum.

Mr. Fulton: They are always worried lest by inadvertence some remarks will slip out from them, as has happened now, showing what the attitude of the government really is. That is why they like to have things hurried through. That is why they shout so loudly when any hon. member gets up to express a view which does not happen to coincide with their own.

I was interested in the statement made by the Prime Minister about half an hour ago. In the principles which he then enunciated as to how redistribution should be carried on within the confines of this present system he put the matter on a very high plane, and I am quite sure that hon. members would agree that that is the way it should be done, if it is to be done by this method.

Unfortunately what has actually happened to date indicates that the Prime Minister is moving in a world of fantasy, quite removed from the reality of what his government is doing with respect to the very proposal now before the house, and quite removed from reality with respect to what his followers in the Liberal party are attempting to do. What has happened makes it quite clear that the matter has not been handled in accordance with the principles which the Prime Minister once more repeated this morning.

We heard from the leader of the opposition for the first time this morning what had in