

*Representation Act, 1985*

propose to remedy this undesirable situation in which the boundaries could be changed during the summer months when people are on holidays? According to the timetable set out by the Chief Electoral Officer, this Bill, if it is approved by the House of Commons and the Senate, will result in a change of boundaries during the summer months of 1988. If the Government so dares, that is the most likely year for a general election.

Whereas there would have been an increase of 10 seats for the Province of Ontario according to the existing redistribution plan, if Motion No. 1 is carried there will be an increase of four seats. Of course, that has the effect of reducing the number of seats by six from the number in the existing redistribution law and will have a devastating impact on northern Ontario since it could well result in the loss of one or two seats.

In 1977 the Commission removed one seat from northern Ontario which covers 88 per cent of the land mass of the Province of Ontario. The Minister will recall that there was long litigation in which tens of thousands of dollars were spent by the municipalities in northwestern Ontario in an attempt to stop that redistribution and the loss of representation. The Minister for International Trade (Mr. Kelleher), on a recent visit to Elliott Lake, said that he wanted to see greater representation from northern Ontario. The impact of this Bill is that we will lose at least one seat and perhaps two seats, depending on how the commission makes its decision. That is why I introduced Motion No. 5. Basically, it describes the geographical area of northern Ontario and asks that it continue to be represented by 11 seats, which would come out of Ontario's allocation of the proposed 99 seats. That is a very fair and equitable arrangement because Ontario is a geographically distinct region representing 88 per cent of the land mass of Canada. Assigning 11 seats in the Ontario allocation does not harm other provinces and will give that distinct geographical location more adequate representation.

● (1200)

With regard to the principle that we are applying to Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Newfoundland where we are providing a floor based on the amount of representation in the thirty-third Parliament, the Hon. Member for Saskatoon sees that as a fair and equitable arrangement for provinces like Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Thus, I am sure, in his sense of equity and fairness he will want to support Motion No. 5 when we get to that motion later this day.

I would like to question the President of the Privy Council. In Motion No. 2 he uses the words "coming into force of this subsection". Whether or not the Government will make a commitment that that subsection will be proclaimed simultaneously with the rest of the Bill because if that subsection were not to be proclaimed, as I understand the legislation, you would end up without the grandfather clause relating to minimum representation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest):** Order, please. I am sorry but I must interrupt the Hon. Member for Algoma (Mr.

Foster). I will now recognize the Hon. Member for Churchill (Mr. Murphy).

**Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the President of the Privy Council, the Government House Leader (Mr. Hnatyshyn) for making the amendments he has. I made similar amendments both in committee and I was ready to make the same type of amendments at report stage, but he has gone along with the direction that I and the New Democratic Party caucus believe is necessary to improve the legislation. In his kind words, the Government House Leader said that I was diligent in my work. I am not sure other committee members would use that same word in describing my work, but I appreciate the kind words.

Despite the fact that we support the two amendments before us in the name of the President of the Privy Council, we still have some concerns for the Bill.

First, I want to talk about some of the things with which we do agree. I think there is some need to be concerned about the actual size of the House and the costs that will accrue to the House as a result. At the same time, in recognition of our Constitution we have at present and our history, a certain number of seats are guaranteed to some of the less populated provinces. The formula with which the Government originally came up put a very heavy penalty on growing provinces. The Government devised a formula according to which, after a quotient of the average seat population in the country was taken, the provinces with growing populations would be entitled to only half of the increase to which they would be entitled by dividing the population of that province by the quotient. This was blatantly unfair. It created a situation where Alberta, Ontario and B.C. would have larger and larger populations in each of their ridings with the passage of time, which would not be the case in other provinces. In other words, the brunt of the Government restraint action was falling on the three provinces with the fastest growing population.

By making the amendment before us at the present time in Motion No. 2, we go a long way toward solving that problem, especially with regard to the commissions and the new redistribution that will take place based on 1981 populations. For example, British Columbia, which would have received five new seats under the legislation passed in 1974, will now receive four seats. That provides adequate protection for people in B.C. as far as any new boundaries that come up as a result of the 1981 census are concerned.

In the long run, in terms of what might happen after the 1991 census, the 2001 census and the 2011 census, that same fairness will be diminished. That is a problem I see with the legislation. However, I do recognize what happens in this House. Almost every new Government has brought in a piece of legislation to change the distribution of seats in the House of Commons. We passed legislation in 1974 and we are passing legislation now to do that. If there are problems in the future, whichever Party forms the Government after 1988-89 will recognize them as being the result of the legislation before us presently.