

*Electoral Boundaries Commissions*

It is a part of the country where one hates to upset old and established customs; at least, the kind of historically minded person that I happen to be hates to do this. I can understand the point of view of the hon. member for Queens very well. I confess to having a certain sympathy for his argument, but such logic as I possess does not seem to run in the same direction as my sympathies. However, I do not think, having said that, that I should say anything more because I am sure there are other hon. members who want to say a word on this matter.

**Mr. Macquarrie:** If I may just say a word, Mr. Chairman, I think the hon. and learned minister has himself very well demonstrated the importance of having this matter considered by the commission. He has put forward arguments pro and arguments con, and that is all I would ask we arrange for. We certainly could not insist on making it mandatory for the commission that there be dual ridings; but I think in view of the sort of process through which the minister went a few moments ago without, as he admitted, having the figures, that the commission, with its experts and their figures, might look at this situation.

I am not going to burden other members of this committee with the details of the situation in Prince Edward Island, but it is obvious that there will only be four seats there. There are only 107,000 people in that province. I think it would be unfortunate if, before the commission moved into the constituency-drawing process in Prince Edward Island, we said to them—in effect this is what we would be doing—that no matter how logical it may appear to have a dual riding in the area surrounding the capital city, or perhaps some other urban population centre, this was not to be the case. I think it would be an unnecessary and unfortunate restriction upon the commission which will find, as all commissions will find in every province, some demographic problems when it gets to Prince Edward Island, where the population spread is not as mathematically neat as it might be for purposes of constituency drawing. So I say that we would improve the potential work of the commission by giving them the opportunity to study the situation, to peruse their figures and to do in detail what the minister has done himself so well during his discourse to us.

**Mr. MacLean (Queens):** Mr. Chairman, I should like to say one or two words in this regard, and make it clear that there are four

[Mr. Pickersgill.]

members of this committee, only two of us here today, who have a special concern in this matter. Because we are the only members of the house who represent dual ridings we are all very much aware of the special considerations and traditions that affect those ridings.

I think our general feeling and concern is that the committee is not being sufficiently careful if it passes the bill as it is, because by so doing it will make it mandatory for the commissions to eliminate dual ridings. I want it understood immediately that I have no thought that the commission should have the privilege of instituting dual ridings where none now exist, nor do I suggest that it should be mandatory that the present dual ridings be continued. I do think it would be reasonable, in light of the fact that these dual constituencies have survived every redistribution in this century, that the arguments pro and con in each case be carefully studied by the commissions in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.

Personally, from a theoretical point of view I favour single constituencies, but I realize that in these special cases the general advantages of having single constituencies are outweighed by other considerations. Therefore I feel we should introduce an amendment at this time, and I think this is non-controversial, which would allow the commissions to look into the matter carefully. If they find it reasonable they should have the option to come up with single constituencies or, if they find heavy arguments in favour of the other side of the question in these two cases, they should not be categorically precluded from the privilege of continuing dual constituencies in one or both cases.

Mr. Chairman, I should be very pleased if the minister would let us know what amendment he would consider appropriate.

**Mr. Knowles:** Mr. Chairman, it seems to me that although the Minister of Transport tried to give the arguments on both sides, his argument was very strong that parliament should not toss this legislative decision to the commissioners. I should also like to add one argument which I do not think he made, unless he did so when I was called away to the telephone. If we give this discretion to a commission, are we going to give it to all the commissions, or just to the two in question?

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Mr. Chairman, I did make that point very clear as far as my position is concerned. I would not approve of any amend-