

Electoral Boundaries Commission

ridings of that nature in every province, some dating back to the time of confederation. I believe, however, that Manitoba and Saskatchewan have a special problem, representing as they do a large and important part of the Canadian economy. The minister is a native of the prairies and I should like to appeal to him to bring to the attention of the government the particular problems of the prairie constituencies where the populations are smaller and the areas to be represented are vast. I hope the minister will provide this information to the government and bring to their attention the necessity of giving serious consideration to providing equal representation as between these two prairie provinces and the Atlantic provinces.

We in the prairies do not expect miracles to happen, but there have been times since confederation when special compensations have been made because of certain features which would make it impossible for the area concerned to have the proper representation. I hope some consideration will be given to an amendment to section 51 of the British North America Act to put a floor under those provinces which are expected to lose members as a result of redistribution. I do not believe it is unreasonable to expect that in the case of Manitoba and Saskatchewan, with equal representation, this floor should be 14 members.

Mr. Enns: I should like to make a few brief comments on this subject. I want to echo pretty well what my colleague from Manitoba, the hon. member for Lisgar has just said. I do feel that Canadians are not in the mood to accept any suggestion to increase the membership of this house. I merely wanted to lend some emphasis to this thought by making a comparison with the United States. If we think of ourselves as having about one tenth the population of the United States, then we would suggest that the United States congress should consist of 2,600 members. I believe everyone agrees this is an exaggerated representation. I feel the people of Canada are adequately represented by the present membership. While there may have to be some amendment to section 51 of the British North America Act, I do not believe Canadians would want the membership of this house increased.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Latulippe: Mr. Chairman, I want, for a few minutes, to express my views on Bill No. C-72, to provide for the establishment of boundaries commissions. I carefully listened to the remarks of hon. members who preceded me, and speaking objectively, I can state that the ideas expressed by the hon. member for Nicolet-Yamaska (Mr. Vincent) are very sim-

ilar to my own with regard to the standards to be set for going ahead with the bill.

As far as I am concerned, I shall advocate a tolerance of 33 per cent instead of 20 per cent. I believe that the difference established in this way between urban and rural ridings would be the most logical and fair, as the many economic, geographical, human and social factors which characterize a riding would be taken in consideration.

As the hon. member for Nicolet-Yamaska said, such a tolerance would establish the maximum population for a Quebec riding at about 93,500 and the minimum at 46,750. I consider those figures quite fair.

To support this statement I shall quote my own riding of Compton-Frontenac, which, at this time comprises about 45 parishes, for a population of 42,366. Including two provincial counties, the federal riding I represent is vast, and rather complex, because of its economic, and even social, diversity. The basis of 33 per cent would certainly include five or six communities in the riding and the population figure would rise by 7,000 or 8,000.

This means that the member's task will become harder, and his representation work wider, because that area is quite large even now. Though a tolerance of 33 per cent would entail some practical disadvantages, it is far better than 20 per cent, because the riding would at least keep its agricultural pattern.

As it is, the rural riding representative has less time than his colleague from the city to spend on legislation and on problems brought before the house. But it is essential to give our population an opportunity to see that some general work is being accomplished by the house member and that is why I think that even if the number of parishes were to be increased, their nature would be relatively the same, and the problems would be relatively identical and the representation work would become easier.

But with the 20 per cent tolerance, my riding—I take that one, but I could take any one of the 28 ridings put on record yesterday by the hon. member for Nicolet-Yamaska—would be cut down to almost one third or one half of its present area. In my riding as in many others, all across Canada, there is a certain regional interest which must be maintained. Surely, splitting of a riding which would reduce that factor of regionalism to a feeling which cannot be found within political structures, would not be in the best interest of the citizens, or would not tend to provide in this house a more homogeneous and better balanced representation.

Moreover, if we look further, if we look into the future, we all agree that our population will almost double within 25 years. It