

*Redistribution*

parliament from Alberta, that the problems which we face in other constituencies such as Peace River, Athabasca and Vegreville have arisen because of the situation created by this new constituency, one which is completely unreasonable from whichever direction you might care to look at it.

It is important, Mr. Speaker, to draw to the attention of the house the objections which were stated by those who presented the protest. I mention these several points because I do not know of any more concise way to bring out the objections which I consider important. I quote:

The mistake made by the commission when they set up the electoral district of Rocky Mountain created problems that far outweigh the benefit. Those problems created are as follows:

(a) The roads and railways run east and west while accessibility demands north and south travel.

(b) Private air travel is impossible in this mountainous area and no recognized commercial air lines have landing fields.

(c) No consideration was given to the accessibility of one point with another and hundreds of miles of travel will be necessary to go from a southern point of the constituency to a northern point of the constituency.

We are suggesting towns like Blairmore in the Crowsnest Pass, and Whitecourt in the far north.

(d) The expense of travel for any member of parliament carrying out his duties and responsibilities or for any candidate electioneering in the area would be exorbitant.

(e) Communication and transportation between points in this electoral district is a physical impossibility.

The actual adjustments made by the commission—I know they spent hours of their time giving consideration to the problems they attempted to solve before reaching the decision that there would be a Rocky Mountain constituency—do not in a very major way affect the constituency of Red Deer. Basically we have a reasonably large urban centre in the city of Red Deer, growing at about the same pace as the general population increase of the two major cities. With a large rural area surrounding, the urban growth compensates for the slower growth on the rural side.

The adjustments recommended so far as my constituency are concerned were not basically objectionable, but to illustrate the point I have made in regard to Rocky Mountain constituency I would cite one example within my constituency which affects only 400 or 500 people so as to show how completely impractical the whole idea of a Rocky Mountain

[Mr. Thompson.]

constituency is. I am thinking of a community known as Strachan, another community known as Ricinus and a very small ranching area west of Sundye. In this area there is a total population of not more than 500 people.

These people are completely cut off from any connection with a town or trading centre. In fact, they have to go as far south as Waterton Lake or as far north as Whitecourt, without having any direct communication with either centre, in order to reach the extremities of this constituency. They are less than ten miles away from the respective market towns of Rocky Mountain House, Caroline or Sundye. Yet they are now separated from them, completely on their own, into an area which involves Banff and Jasper National Parks.

● (5:10 p.m.)

Even more important than this, a very grave error arises out of the fact that three small Indian reserves in this area are completely cut off from all commercial and social connections within the constituency. We are trying to encourage our Indian people to accept their responsibility of using the franchise; yet here we are taking a few hundred people, for the sake of a constituency known as Rocky Mountain, and completely cutting them off from any connection whatever with their normal activities in the community in which these reserves are situated. This is a very serious mistake and one which cannot be condoned. A member of parliament representing this constituency must spend many hours travelling to reach this little area, and so must the people who happen to reside in Banff, Jasper or Waterton parks who wish to get in touch with their member. I use that just as an illustration. To my way of thinking Rocky Mountain constituency is behind the whole problem that we are trying to put forward in this debate.

I should like to give one more example of a glaring mistake made by the commission in not giving consideration to certain matters which I previously mentioned. The town of Three Hills is in the southwest corner of the constituency of Red Deer. In the proposed electoral changes the boundary would go through the centre of the town. That town has less than 2,000 people. It is to be cut in half, so that those in the south side of town are in one constituency and those in the north half in another. I do not think there is any excuse for this because it cleaves the town in half, making it into two political entities. I think that is another proof of the