

Electoral Boundaries

ly of a report. I am not so much concerned about bills, because I do not like to find myself in disagreement with this committee. Its members were very agreeable to me on a bill earlier this year, and they shared my views with regard to the nature of commissioners' reports.

I would like to have had a great deal more to say about this, but when I look at report No. 5 of the Committee on Privileges and Elections as it appears in *Votes and Proceedings* I find that there was absolutely no discussion. There was only the question of whether clause 1 should carry, and it was carried. I wonder if a discussion is reported or is in evidence elsewhere. I find in the minutes of the proceedings that that is what happened.

I would like to say that I can recognize the point of view put forward by the parliamentary secretary, but I invite hon. members who represent ridings that are on the periphery of major urban centres to look at this. I know that, ever since we have had independent commissions, all of the points I have made and that have been made by my colleagues, and practically all the representations I have heard, have centred on the rate of growth of these constituencies.

I recall the 1966 or 1967 commission. They did not alter the boundaries of my constituency as I had suggested they should. I knew where the development of the city was taking place in my constituency, and I warned the chairman that already he was out of date and that the population of my riding had gone up by perhaps 30,000 over the rate that was posted in the report.

The changes in Edmonton West in 1966 took place when the population was perhaps 145,000 or 150,000. There were 88,000 voters. I was left with about 55 per cent so-called after redistribution, but I warned the commissioners that what they were doing in leaving me a certain section and not giving it to the adjoining constituency would mean that both constituencies lost voters over the remaining period because they were constrained.

● (1610)

Already, six years after the event, the population of my constituency is in excess of what it was in 1966. The relative rate of growth was a most important thing to consider, yet the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River (Mr. Reid) would seek to remove it from the consideration of the commissioners. On the other hand I want to ask the commissioners to take into account certain parts of my present constituency so that we can look at the relative rates of growth.

It is senseless to hold that a central core constituency which will likely have a zero population growth, or even a negative population growth, should be held down to the strict figures provided by the formula, and that alongside it a constituency could be set up with relatively the same number of people. We know that the developers are out there and things are going to be booming, so why not take into account relative rates of growth?

I am satisfied that a number of hon. members agree with me and I am wondering why the elimination. I would have thought the committee would have been wiser to add another factor into the consideration which would take care of the problem that has been raised. I agree there is a problem, but I do not think we are dealing with it in the

[Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West).]

right way by removing this particular factor. In all honesty I think the hon. member is creating a greater difficulty. I see the hon. member for Ottawa West (Mr. Francis) in the House; he is faced with the same problem as I am, and I think he would share my views.

How would we do this? I would hope that we could agree to look at the question again. It is my view that the report should be referred back to the committee for further examination and consideration of not only the factors of the rates of growth but of the factors which motivated the hon. member in putting forth his bill. In view of the fact that we are going to have a redistribution, in all sincerity I urge the House to send it back to the committee for reconsideration, and I will make a motion to that effect.

I therefore move, seconded by the hon. member for Brandon-Souris (Mr. Dinsdale):

That Bill C-370 be not now read a third time but be referred back to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections for reconsideration.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): The House has heard the motion proposed by the hon. member. Is the House ready for the question?

Mr. Stan Schumacher (Palliser): Madam Speaker, I am sorry that I cannot accept the amendment of my colleague with too much enthusiasm. I speak as a member who represents fringe areas of one of the major cities of Alberta. The constituency of Palliser includes the north side, the west side and the east side of the city of Calgary, and there has been a large increase in population since the last redistribution. I think my hon. friend has failed to recognize that there is more to representing a constituency than the mere fact of population. In the 1974 election there were 72,000 people on the voters' list for Palliser, 50,000 of whom resided within the corporate limits of the city of Calgary, so that it could be considered an urban riding.

I must speak in favour of the motion for third reading of this bill. I hope it will not be referred back to the committee. I had the privilege of sitting on that committee the last time the bill was before it, and there was general support for the proposition. One hon. member from Scarborough spoke in opposition, but with the idea that it seemed as if we should have considered representation by population in this country. It has always been my view that the law of the land should have a chance to apply, and it is my interpretation of Bill C-370 that that is what we are trying to accomplish here.

In the 1964 debate which led to the passage of the present act there was provision for a 25 per cent tolerance. As the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River (Mr. Reid) has pointed out, in many instances this tolerance has not been applied. That was particularly the case with the report of the commission that led to the suspension of the past redistribution. There are many instances in Alberta where so-called rural cities had populations assigned to them vastly in excess of those of other ridings or constituencies in the province.

I see the hon. member for Lethbridge (Mr. Hurlburt) in the House. He may have something to say about the treatment he received under the law as it now stands.