

Electoral Boundaries Commissions

of us have had, that the chief electoral officer has preparations in effect so that the intent of this particular section, in administrative terms, has already been carried out? Are the preparations practically complete, if you read this as applying to the census taken in the year 1961?

Mr. Pickersgill: I am afraid I did not catch the purport of the hon. gentleman's question.

Mr. Fisher: Well, this section is setting up preparations for what shall be sent by the dominion statistician. Are we to assume—

Mr. Pickersgill: Is the hon. gentleman speaking about clause 10 or clause 11?

Mr. Douglas: Clause 11; clause 10 was passed, I thought.

Mr. Fisher: I assume that this has already been done for the 1961 census. My question is, is this a fact?

Mr. Pickersgill: I do not believe it could be done in the sense in which the legislation is drafted, because this is not an act of parliament. Certain computations may have been made which would be the basis for carrying out these instructions of parliament, if parliament ever does give these instructions. I could not say whether or not they have been formally, but I feel quite sure it is well known to all hon. members that computations have been made based upon provisions of section 51 of the British North America Act.

Clause agreed to.

On clause 12—*Calculation of members to be assigned to each province; preparation of report.*

[Translation]

Mr. Grégoire: Mr. Chairman, with regard to clause 12 of the bill, there is one point I wish to refer to. As a matter of fact, I did not expect in the least we would reach this section—

[Text]

Mr. Pickersgill: I beg the hon. gentleman's pardon for interrupting him. I believe I inadvertently said clause 13 should stand when it should be clause 12 which should be held up pending the passage of the rest of the bill, because I think it is clause 12 that contains the tolerance feature which I am sure the committee will want to debate.

Mr. Knowles: No, it is clause 13.

Mr. Pickersgill: Well, I was just a little bit hasty.

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[Translation]

Mr. Grégoire: Mr. Chairman, I was saying that we did not expect to reach clause 12 tonight, because we know an amendment and a subamendment will be moved to clause 6. We thought clause 12 would be considered tomorrow.

However, since this clause is before us tonight I shall make the remarks I intend to make just the same.

I wanted to point out first of all, regarding section 51 of the B.N.A. Act—if I give the wrong figures, I hope the house will excuse me, because I did not bring the necessary material tonight, not knowing that we would be studying this section and I am caught a little off my guard—

In the past, as far as ridings are concerned, it was provided that there would always be 65 in the province of Quebec, in relation to the rest of the country. The number of ridings could change, but always on the basis of the population in the province of Quebec: dividing this population by 65 would give the equivalent number of ridings in the province of Quebec in relation to the population in the rest of the country. It gave the number of ridings for the rest of the country, and the number of members of parliament for the province of Quebec remained the same.

I do not have the original text of section 51 of the British North America Act, but I think that it was changed at a certain time to increase the number of members of parliament to 75 in the province of Quebec, and for the rest of the country, the number of ridings would vary in relation to the population in proportion to what it was in the rest of Canada, while in the province of Quebec it remained at 75. Now this is going to be changed, but how is it going to be changed? It is not stipulated in the legislation. It is said:

Subject to section 51.

Who will mention the fixed number of 75, while the rest of the country will vary according to population?

In the province of Quebec there is an election act dating from confederation. In the text of the confederation, it is said that in the province of Quebec there shall be some ridings which will not change. Why? Because at that time, in 1867, there was in the province of Quebec an English minority which was living mainly in some ridings called eastern townships.

It was provided that these constituencies would not vary, even though the population