

Redistribution

Mr. Starr: I was only talking about the government side.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rinfret): Has the house concluded its consideration of objection No. 11 concerning the province of New Brunswick?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rinfret): The house having considered this objection, it will be my duty pursuant to section 20 of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act to refer the report of the Boundaries Commission, together with a copy of the objection and also a copy of the debates of the house, back to the commission for reconsideration thereof. We shall now proceed with the consideration of the objection concerning the province of Alberta, Objection No. 2, found on pages 2 and 3 of the pamphlet.

Proposed Electoral Districts of the Province of Alberta:

That, pursuant to Section 20 of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act (Chapter 31, Statutes of Canada 1964-65) and for the reasons hereinafter specified, consideration be given by this House to the matter of an objection to the provisions of the report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission for the province of Alberta, laid before this house by Mr. Speaker on Wednesday, January 19, 1966.

The objections to the provisions of the Alberta report are as follows:

1. Throughout Alberta the commission failed to give special emphasis to geographical considerations, the sparsity, density and relative rate of growth of the population, and ignored or overlooked the special problems of communication and transportation when they divided the said province into nineteen (19) new electoral districts.

2. The commission failed to give special consideration and special appreciation to accessibility of one region to another region in many of the rural electoral districts when determining the boundaries of the same.

3. The commission failed to give and pay proper attention to the physical, social or economic cohesion in many of the new electoral districts created and appeared to ignore and did ignore the question of unity or community of interest and thereby rendering adequate representation of the people in parliament a virtually impossible task.

4. The commission erred in law by failing to carry out the terms and conditions of section 13 of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act.

5. The commission failed to take into consideration that the boundaries of the majority of electoral districts of Alberta as they existed prior to redistribution, were in accordance with the spirit of the terms and conditions and the formula in law of the said act in question, and the undersigned members therefore suggest that the commission could have increased the representation of Alberta by two (2) members, by giving each major city;

[The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rinfret).]

namely Calgary and Edmonton, one (1) more electoral district as the population warrants the same. The balance of electoral districts could have remained the same except for a small adjustment as to population to one or two electoral districts. In this manner, the commission could have avoided the grave errors they made as described in the preceding and subsequent paragraphs.

6. The whole problem with the new electoral districts could have been avoided if the commission had not created the electoral district of Rocky Mountain. This district because of difficulties hereinafter stated, should be abolished. The creation of same put the whole report and map of the electoral districts out of balance and contrary to law.

7. The mistake made by the commission when they set up the electoral district of Rocky Mountain created problems that far outweigh the benefit. These 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 airlines 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. (For example, Blairmore to Whitecourt).

(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.

8. And such other objections that the undersigned members may deem necessary to carry out the spirit and terms and conditions of the act in question.

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Bow River): Mr. Speaker, like the speakers who have preceded me, I shall try to be brief. This objection is made in accordance with section 20 of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act which gives members of Parliament a last opportunity to make representations to the commission. Like hon. members representing New Brunswick and others who have spoken, as one of the spokesmen for my province on the subject of redistribution I appreciate the difficulty the commission faced in arriving at its decision. I appreciate also that the purpose and spirit of the act were that these decisions should be reached by independent commissions rather than by parliament, thereby taking this matter outside the field of politics.

This brings me to the first point I wish to make. If hon. members will turn to pages two and three of the objections filed with Mr. Speaker pursuant to the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act, they will find that our objection was signed by a number of members. We signed it and there is one objection,