

British North America Act

whole problem of redistribution and I think a couple of paragraphs from them would state the case for a commission fairly well. I quote:

Ottawa, April 21—Several of Canada's most prominent politicians of recent years have denounced the present system of drawing up the boundaries of ridings.

Prime Minister Mackenzie King was against it. Senator Charles Gavan Power, as a leading member of the Liberals in the commons, was for years the leading champion of reform.

In opposition, Conservative Leader George Drew and the then member for Lake Centre, John Diefenbaker, called repeatedly for appointment of an independent commission to take the "geography" of redistribution out of the hands of the politicians.

Thus this measure that I have introduced has had support of a predated kind from the gentleman wielding the most power in the government at the present time. This is not to say that objections could not be taken to this bill. You do not change the British North America Act easily or casually.

The purpose of this bill is to introduce in subsection (1) of section 51 of the B.N.A. Act, 1857, the underlined words "independent of the parliament of Canada" so that the readjustment of the representation in the commons be done in future by an independent body rather than by a committee of the House of Commons.

The British North America Act, as it reads at the present time, says that such authority as parliament shall determine. Thus it could be argued that parliament already has this power to create an independent commission without changing the British North America Act. As a matter of fact, that argument has been presented in the past when this idea has come up but I do not think it is something we need to bother with here.

I have spent a considerable amount of time on this topic and tomorrow in the mail each member will receive a typed brief of about 16 mimeographed pages covering the rules for sharing the seats among the provinces. The second sheet gives the representation by population based on the 1956 census. This is the projected representation first time we have readjusted from the quinquennial census. The third and fourth sheets cover the same sort of thing; the first operation and the second operation from the D.B.S. estimate of population of last July 1, 1957.

The last sheet of the first set gives the 30 largest Canadian constituencies in area with 1956 population. This is the point where I became interested in redistribution because if you look down the list you will see that Port Arthur is the fifth largest constituency in terms of area, being 148,482 square miles, being bigger than most of the maritime provinces put together. It has a population of 78,111, which is the largest of any of those 30

largest constituencies. Attempting to campaign in such a constituency, and recognizing that both the Liberal and Conservative candidates were also aware of the problem, set me thinking of redistribution and of some means of evening up and getting back to "rep, by pop." to a better apportionment.

I would like the permission of the house to place on *Hansard* two bibliographies which were prepared by the librarian of the library of parliament, which I think hon. members will like to refer to in the next four years, perhaps, as this topic keeps coming up again and again. One is entitled "Redistribution—Canada" and the other "Redistribution—Great Britain and Dominions".

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rea): The hon. member would like permission to place them in *Hansard*?

Mr. Fisher: Yes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rea): Has the hon. member permission to put them in *Hansard*?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Fisher: They read as follows:

Redistribution—Canada.

Dawson, R. M. Government of Canada, 1952, pages 32, 37, 39, 140-1, 362-369.

Clokie, H. M. Canadian government and politics, 1944, pages 129-33, 303-5.

Ward, Norman. The Canadian House of Commons' representation, 1950. 19, 58, 39, 42-7, 50-1, 36-7, 20-1, 29-35, 46-49.

Basis of representation in the House of Commons, by N. Ward. In Canadian Journal of Economics, Nov. 1949, pp. 477-94.

"There'll be some changes made" [Redistribution of Provincial representation, by A. F. Cross]. In Canadian Business, March 1951, p. 42.

Redistribution problem by M. Barkway. In Saturday Night, Nov. 17, 1951, pp. 2-3.

Scramble for seats, by R. B. Fraser. In Maclean's Magazine, May 15, 1952, pp. 76-77.

Representation in the House of Commons of the 21st Parliament: party and province. In Canadian Journal of Economics, Feb. 1952, pp. 77-87.

Representation at Ottawa. In World Affairs, April 1952, p. 13.

Redistribution of seats in Parliament. In World Affairs, Feb. 1952, p. 11.

How best allot federal seats. In Financial Post, Dec. 19, 1953, p. 21.

Redistribution of 1952, by N. M. Ward. In Canadian Journal of Economics, Aug. 1953, pp. 341-60.

Canada: House of Commons [Readjustment of Representation]. In Journal of the Society of Clerks-at-the-Table for 1952, pp. 174-175.

Redistribution bills, 1892, 1893, 1899, 1900, 1903. Analysis of debates, statistics and general information. CPC800.

Redistribution referred to in Article by Austin Cross—history, present difficulties, etc., 1943. CPC1109.

Redistribution, 1943. Mr. King refused Duplessis' request to transmit protest and gave reasons. Ottawa Evening Journal, July 15, 1943, pp. 1-

Redistribution—Great Britain and Dominions. Wilding, Norman and Laundry, Philip. An encyclopedia of Parliament. L., 1958. pp. 120-1.

Encyclopedia Britannica, vol. 17, pp. 317-18.