

Electoral Boundaries Commission

to have equal representation, but that they allow for a ratio of between seven and five to make adjustments that take care of the area factor, and second to take care of the location of cities and towns that may throw the matter awry.

The Prime Minister seems to have given an indication that the reason he personally was prepared to take the lead with regard to redistribution was related to his own experience. I have gone through the old debates, and I expect he remembers very clearly the debate which took place in July, 1947 when he, Mr. Tucker, and Mr. Wright from Saskatchewan got so deeply involved in what was in effect a public quarrel about the way Saskatchewan was being divided up. For the sake of those people who read *Hansard* I want to put on the record a comment made by Mr. Wright, who was a third member of the Saskatchewan committee on redistribution. As recorded at page 5668 of *Hansard* for July 15, 1947 he stated:

As the member for Rosthern has said, the member for Lake Centre—

He is now the Prime Minister.

—did not appear to be very much interested in any other part of Saskatchewan than his own constituency. In the proceedings in the committee he raised only one point that I can remember with regard to any other constituency and that was with reference to Melville, adding an area south of Qu'Appelle valley to that constituency.

If that is the basis on which we are to deal with redistribution, the personal interest and personal preserves of individual members, I do not think we can ever reach fair decisions, and that apparently was the basis on which this matter was considered.

I place that on the record, Mr. Chairman, because although I do not want to reduce the nobility of the Prime Minister's motives I think it might be somewhat of an antidote to the general conception a stranger might get on looking at *Hansard*, that the Prime Minister is a complete St. George destroying the dragon.

Mr. Lambert: He was just defending himself.

Mr. Fisher: Did the hon. member make a comment?

Mr. Lambert: He was just defending himself. He was "the target for tonight".

Mr. Fisher: That may be, but it seemed to me that last night he was crediting himself with more noble motives than that. Surely, it is not unkind to reduce a man to a politician.

Mr. Jones: They were trying to carve up his constituency. That was the whole object of that redistribution.

Mr. Fisher: I would advise the hon. member to read the debates. If he did it would put a new perspective on matters.

Mr. Pickersgill: It certainly would.

Mr. Jones: I read the debate.

Mr. Fisher: When the Prime Minister introduced this measure last night he made reference to the situation in the United States, where a new decision of the supreme court has given great hope to people affected there. The situation in the United States, so far as the intervention of the jurists was concerned, was dealt with in a judgment made some years ago by Justice Frankfurter, who said:

Courts ought not to enter this political thicket. The remedy for unfairness in districting is to secure state legislatures that will apportion properly, or to invoke the ample powers of congress.

This is an example of juristic attitude which I take to say that under its present constitution congress should take the leadership in invoking powers and straightening out malapportionment. I would say that the reasons with which the Prime Minister introduced this argument, pointing out how serious is the problem, are applicable in Canada, and I have to agree that we have not handled this whole question with any fairness and we very much need the kind of solution he is advancing at this time.

The Chairman: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but his time has expired. Does the committee wish the hon. member to carry on?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Fisher: I shall only be a few more minutes, Mr. Chairman. I was talking about the relationship of malapportionment to the Canadian situation. I was approached the other day by a lawyer who wanted to know about this, and I thought it was worth while going ahead and trying to watch what action in Canada might lead to the same result that was obtained in the United States. I do not know enough about the jurisdiction of the courts in this country, but it does seem to me that this would be a very nice issue for some public-minded person in the country to take up at the present time, perhaps under the bill of rights. I refer to taking up this question that was brought before the supreme court in the United States; that is, whether there is a legal right to have your vote count with some means of equality with other citizens in the country.

It seems to me it would still be important and relevant in this country to have such a decision, because all the pieties that we may utter here about the need for fairness in this