

*Redistribution*

councils, community associations, political representatives and many other persons having special knowledge.

While general objection is taken to the provisions of the report for the foregoing reasons, additional particular individual objections are specified in letters addressed by members of the House of Commons representing electoral districts in the province of Ontario to the Speaker of the House of Commons, which letters are annexed hereto as appendix "A" and incorporated herein.

Further detailed and specific proposals for the alteration or amendment of the report of the commission will be made by members of the House of Commons representing electoral districts in Ontario during debate in the House of Commons upon this motion, in order that the spirit, intent and purpose of the Electoral Boundaries Adjustment Act may be carried out equitably and adequately.

● (6:50 p.m.)

**Hon. R. A. Bell (Carleton):** Mr. Speaker, a fair and equitable redistribution of Ontario ridings is now a task of immense magnitude, and it has been greatly intensified by the long delay since the 1961 census. To say that I am disappointed with the report now under consideration of the Electoral Boundaries Commission for Ontario would be to put it mildly. However, early in my professional career I learned that counsel achieves nothing by telling home truths to the judge. So today, with the greatest of difficulty, I resist the temptation of expressing, with the conviction which I feel, the basic home truths about those whom the parliament has made judge and jury, court of appeal and court of last resort.

One of the problems, sir, of debating redistribution is that it gives the appearance of being self-serving. I do not agree that such is the case at all. I assert that politicians in this chamber can be as objective, as impartial and as independent as any outside tribunal. Certainly my attempt tonight will be to avoid the slightest semblance of partisanship or any political self-serving and to approach the issues objectively and impartially.

Indeed, sir, I believe that if this house were to establish a subcommittee now with His Honour, the Speaker, in his capacity as the member for Stormont, in the chair, and to include the Minister of Public Works (Mr. McLraith), the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Greene), the hon. lady for Grenville-Dundas (Mrs. Wadds) and myself, we could finish redistribution of eastern Ontario ridings before midnight tonight and it would be with the unanimous approval of this house and the public and would establish the eastern Ontario ridings on a basis much fairer and more equitable to the electorate—to the electorate,

and I want to emphasize that—than the division proposed by the commission.

That may only indicate the extent of my personal disillusionment with the so-called independence and impartiality of the commission when the commission so obviously lacks knowledge of the geography and social and economic life of the province. If the carving up of Ontario ridings as suggested by the commission had ever been attempted by politicians under the old system a howl of gerrymandering would have gone up from coast to coast, the like of which has never been heard.

Most of my life has been spent in political organization which has taken me into every area of the province. There are few villages and townships that I have not visited and I believe I know Ontario, its geography, its economy and its social and community life. It is on the basis of a lifetime experience that I want to make submissions to the commission, with great respect to their integrity but, I say, with equal firmness.

The basic and only purpose of redistribution, Mr. Speaker, is to achieve a genuinely representative House of Commons, to permit the election of men and women to parliament who represent not merely geographic units but represent the cultural, economic and social interests of the people.

Mere arithmetical accuracy and dead mathematical uniformity does not represent a proper redistribution. Nor does it enable the people to be properly represented in this chamber. The mere drawing of lines upon a map whenever a standard number of people can be contained therein is not redistribution but is a cartographer's nightmare.

In my respectful submission, the Ontario commission made its first mistake in not accepting and using sufficiently the latitude allowed by parliament. It has attempted in the first commission redistribution too great a mathematical uniformity in the province of Ontario without using sufficiently the 25 per cent efficiency formula.

My present electoral district of Carleton is, I believe, the most populous combined rural-urban riding in all of Canada, and from my own experience I can state that an urban member of parliament can service his riding with much greater ease than a rural member. Exact numerical equality is not a genuine representation but in fact discrimination against rural areas which are thereby actually under-represented.