

Redistribution

Yesterday the suggestion was left that if the members of the opposition had really read the debates in other legislative chambers we would not have been saying that this alternative system had proven satisfactory elsewhere. I quoted from the United Kingdom *Hansard* of 1948 to show that, far from there being criticism of the commission method, there was uniform approval of that method, and that it was the extent to which the government of the day in the United Kingdom had departed from the recommendations of the commission that criticism was directed to what the house was being called upon to approve. It has worked satisfactorily in Australia, in the opinion of those who are associated with the results of that course. It has worked satisfactorily in New Zealand, according to the statement of responsible men there. It has worked satisfactorily elsewhere.

The reason I refer to this again this morning is that I would hope, even at this late date, that the government might see fit to reconsider its position to avoid the suggestion that there has been what has been so properly described as a racket taking place in the form of legislative procedure. I have seen questions asked as to how this would work out. It is rather difficult to tell whether supporters of the government believe in another method. At times when legislation is not before the house, there always seems to be a uniform expression of opinion that another method would be desirable. During the present debate there have been those who have indicated an alternative method would be desirable, but that the time is not ripe. There have been those who have returned to the argument that the members of this house, as representatives of the people of Canada, can best determine what should be done.

In response to that argument, may I point out that there never has been any suggestion that the members of this house or that the parliament of Canada should abdicate its responsibility on anything that is entrusted to it. The British North America Act imposes responsibility upon parliament to carry out a redistribution of the representation of the people in the House of Commons every ten years after the decennial census. It would be improper, and highly improper, if we abdicated our responsibility, and placed that in the hands of some other body that has not been suggested. The question has been asked, what is suggested? What is suggested is this. Appoint an independent commission—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I believe the house voted on that question during the present

session. It would not be in order to revive that debate at this time on third reading. The rules with respect to third reading are much more strictly interpreted than on second reading. On third reading, the debate must be confined to the bill itself and not outside matters.

Mr. Drew: Perhaps it will simplify matters, Mr. Speaker, if I indicate that before I sit down I propose to move the usual motion that this bill be not now read a third time, but that it be read this day six months hence. I explain that I propose to move that motion so that I might still discuss the subject without it being suggested that I am still debating after the motion has been made.

When I refer to the alternative method, I am explaining why I suggest that this motion should not be regarded as merely a delaying process, but should be regarded as a procedure by which the government will be given an opportunity to consider the desirability of employing a method which has met with such satisfaction elsewhere. If Your Honour so rules, in the face of that resolution which, it seems to me, brings directly into issue the possibility of some alternative proceeding in the meantime, then of course I would leave the matter where it stands.

I had not intended to extend my argument on this point which relates to the reasons why I emphasize the desirability of delaying this bill's coming into force; I simply wanted to say that, under the proposals that have been made, the responsibility of parliament would remain, because any commission appointed by this parliament would report back to parliament itself, and parliament would then have the responsibility for accepting, in whole or in part, the recommendations that had been made and of acting or not acting upon those recommendations just as parliament does in connection with the report of any other commission which it may appoint.

I leave the matter there, Mr. Speaker, because that puts forward the point I wish to make, except that I confess that I would have liked to go into more detail in view of the suggestion I have seen that we have not clearly put forward exactly what it is that we are suggesting. I have been suggesting that, with the best judgment we can exercise and with the experience of other jurisdictions before us, we should devise a similar procedure best adapted to our own federal system and to our own particular requirements. I shall leave the matter there