

Redistribution

Fort St. John will present. It would, therefore, benefit these people if they remain in the same constituency as Prince George.

4. The area could be much better served if three constituencies were constituted from the present constituencies of Cariboo and Skeena.

Mr. G. L. Chatterton (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, my remarks will be brief. The hon. member for Kamloops (Mr. Fulton) has in an eminently successful manner presented arguments relevant to objection 16 which was signed by representatives of all the political parties in British Columbia. First, I might explain that I am dealing entirely with the two ridings of Victoria and Esquimalt-Saanich in the southern part of Vancouver Island. To avoid confusion I might also explain that the municipality of Esquimalt is not included in the riding of Esquimalt-Saanich. It is a misnomer. But instead of taking the easy and right course and merely changing the name, the electoral boundaries commission took the difficult and anomalous decision to take the municipality of Esquimalt out of Victoria and put it with Saanich so that the name could be justified.

When the commission sat in Victoria on September 14, 1965, briefs were presented by all the local municipalities involved, by the chamber of commerce and by the shipyards. The gist of the arguments presented by all these municipalities and other bodies was virtually the same and the objective was the same. Yet to our amazement the commission apparently failed to recognize any of these representations. At any rate, it did not act on them in a significant way.

The first objection on which we base our argument is that the commission did not consider the rate of growth. As the hon. member for Kamloops has pointed out, the chairman of the commission sitting in Victoria said himself that this factor would not be taken into consideration. This is why I asked the Secretary of State (Miss LaMarsh) a few days ago whether I could have a transcript of the proceedings during those hearings. I wanted to quote the actual words used by the chairman. However, as the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker) has pointed out, the commission in cavalier fashion refused to give the house to which it is responsible any information whatsoever.

During those public hearings the chairman of the commission said to me, when I made my presentation using arguments based on the rate of growth, that the commission could

[Mr. Johnston.]

not consider anticipated growth. I put it to him that the act itself in section 13 says that the commission may consider relative growth. The chairman told me that in his view this referred to past growth. How ridiculous, Mr. Speaker. What would be the purpose of considering past growth except for the purpose of considering future growth?

We used figures which had been prepared for us by an official board in British Columbia in order to forecast what would happen to population figures in the proposed constituencies. In 1961 the difference between the populations of Victoria and Esquimalt-Saanich was approximately 1,000. By 1971, when the next redistribution will take place, the difference will be 25,000. The commission completely overlooked the fact that the city of Victoria is fully built up and that the surrounding areas are growing rapidly. Indeed, the commission admitted that it did not consider the anticipated relative rate of growth and went so far as to say it could not.

I made a definite proposal which I think would solve this problem not only with regard to anticipated growth but with regard to other considerations which I shall mention later. This proposal would result in the creation of a very slight difference in population between the two constituencies both at the present time and in 1971. Incidentally, the previous speaker, the hon. member for Okanagan-Revelstoke (Mr. Johnston), indicated that some people say that members who are objecting to these proposals are concerned only with their own interest. If this were the case I would not be speaking today. So far as my own interests are concerned the proposal of the commission would certainly benefit me.

Mr. Johnston: On a point of order, I should like to make it clear that it was not I who said this. I said it had been said that members taking part in this debate were speaking in their own interests. I want it to be clear that I am in no way indicating that this is so.

Mr. Chatterton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did not mean to say that the hon. member said it. I meant to say he had mentioned that some people had said it.

● (3:00 p.m.)

The second basis of objection that the municipalities had was with regard to section 13(c)(ii) which says that the commission may consider community or diversity of interest. What the commission is proposing is that the municipality of Esquimalt be removed from