

*Redistribution Commission*

best laid plans of mice and men gang aft agley." That is why I find it so difficult to understand that parliament had not decided long ago to deal with these matters from a scientific and objective basis rather than from a political basis.

I would like to make some mention of the degree of tolerance that will be decided upon in the legislation. We have had various suggestions made as to how far this should go. Certainly it should represent the traditional viewpoint of representation by population. However, the geography of Canada being such as it is, with the population distributed across the country on a somewhat inequitable basis, we must give ample consideration to the geographical aspects of representation.

It is not just a rural-urban problem in the traditional sense, because in many parts of Canada there are no urban communities in the sociological sense. In some constituencies there are a series of small towns which might be semi-urban and semi-rural, but they certainly do not meet all the characteristics of the typical urban community. The very fact that there is a constituency made up of a series of these small towns places an additional burden of responsibility on the member representing it.

For example, in my constituency there are about a dozen substantial towns, and this means that all the community organizations and services are duplicated in each of these areas. A member representing an urban constituency might complain that its population is somewhat larger. According to the tolerance that is being suggested, he might have a population of some 85,000 in an entirely urban constituency, but in his constituency he has only one group of social institutions. There is only one of each denomination of churches, only one Canadian Legion and only one municipal authority to deal with, and so on. I could go through the whole list of community institutions, but in what I might call a rural-urban constituency, a constituency that is semi-rural, semi-urban, with up to 12 small communities in it, and with a population of 70,000, all these social institutions are duplicated in each of the larger towns.

It would seem to me, therefore, Mr. Chairman, that the matter of tolerance should be very closely examined by the government, and those who will be carrying on discussions with the government regarding the specific terms of the legislation. This has particular significance in the province of Manitoba. As I have already mentioned we have an urban community which, in terms of population, represents almost one half the total population of the province. I suppose the population of greater Winnipeg now would be somewhere around 500,000 which does in absolute terms

of population represent one half of the population of the province. If some of the suggestions put forward in the preliminary statement by the Secretary of State are applied in the province of Manitoba, it would mean that an urban centre such as Winnipeg occupying a comparatively small geographic area would have almost one half the representation of that province. This would be particularly so were the province of Manitoba to lose another seat and reduce their representation to 13 members.

Therefore I take this opportunity to point out to the Secretary of State, and through him to the government, that in setting a specific percentage quota this problem, which is perhaps peculiar to a country like Canada, should be given earnest consideration. If we are going to have the kind of representation which is required in all parts of this country we must give consideration to geography in the specific terms I have outlined in my remarks this evening. It was mentioned the other day when we were discussing this resolution that the provincial government of Manitoba had already tackled this problem of redistribution within its own boundaries; and I think hon. members of this committee would be interested in knowing that it gave very careful consideration to the special problem which I have outlined.

Another point I should like to raise is that of the machinery that is to be set up in order to carry out this independent, impartial redistribution. On all sides of the house there has been agreement that the spirit of independence must prevail if this forward step is going to prove successful. The only difference between the official opposition and the government is that of the membership of the commission and the number of commissions which should operate in the various areas of Canada. The Leader of the Opposition expressed some reservation about a commission for each province. I would underline that reservation because it seems to me its going to be difficult enough to get uniformity across the country, because of different social, economic and geographic circumstances prevailing in the various regions of Canada, if we do not have some method which will closely integrate the policy. True enough there is going to be an attempt at co-ordination among the ten commissions suggested by the government in this resolution. However, it seems to me that some closer measure of co-ordination is going to be required; perhaps the regional approach would be better than the provincial approach. But there certainly needs to be some better method of co-ordination to meet the special circumstances of