

Electoral Boundaries

to put in an objection. I believe that in future publications concerning redistribution we will have to put forward a better effort to enlighten our people and make them fully aware that it is in their interests to speak up at public hearings and express their wishes with regard to redistribution. This probably is more true in the rural ridings of Ontario than it is in the urban ridings. There is a different way of life. The representation is different.

I believe that the rural people are closer to their member of parliament. They expect him to attend as many functions as possible. As a rural member I enjoy these functions, but there are more than I really can attend. However, this is part of the role of a rural member of parliament. This is good for all concerned. It gives the member an exposure to his constituents. They feel freer to come to him with their problems when they can meet him at a hockey match, a fall fair, or other functions in which they participate with the member.

On such occasions the people will talk to their member with a much lighter heart and more freely than if they met him at some more formal function. I think this factor must be taken into consideration in respect of the rural parts of Canada. We must consider the rural way of life in Canada and the close relationship that members have with their constituents.

I know that many metropolitan areas are ably represented. But if I were free to do so I could tell the story as explained to me by an hon. member when he described some of the urban ridings in Ontario. I believe my language would be restrained. However, this is a story for another place.

The news media also come into this. A large riding may have up to 20 or more newspapers. In addition there are many radio and television stations which cover the area. In an urban area there may be two television stations and two radio stations. In the rural areas one has to cater to a smaller media. This also must be taken into account. It is difficult to get the message across to one's constituents in a large, spread-out rural riding.

The population growth picture probably is something else to which we do not give enough attention in respect of the formula concerning the electoral boundaries commissions. Many parts of rural Ontario, the smaller cities and larger towns, receive an influx of retired people who want the better way of life. We cannot blame them for that, but we must consider that. There will be many thousands more people in the ridings by the time this is enacted. This is why at this time the population growth potential should be considered.

Now I should like to return to the matter of community of interest on which I touched briefly a few moments ago. In the rural parts of Ontario because of the methods of transportation and communication the people mingle back and forth. They have different community activities. Senior citizens in senior citizens' homes are now being bussed to other senior citizens' homes, and up to Ottawa by special buses with wheelchairs in them and everything else. This is part of life in a rural riding which is not as common as it is in urban ridings, not that it does not exist in urban ridings but it is on a different scale. They suffer from a lack of closeness to their elected representative at either the provincial or municipal level.

● (2050)

Taking all this into consideration I think that the commission has done a reasonably good job. I know that approximately 75 per cent of the suggestions that were put before the commission by different organizations and groups within my riding were well received. This is a very good average. I know that probably we would all like to have 100 per cent of our requests accepted, but 75 per cent is a good average. It is a good average for a job that is hard to do if you wish to please everybody, and it is a good average for a job with a formula which was probably outdated before it was started. That is why I cannot be too critical and say that the commission should have done this or should have done things over again.

As I said a few moments ago, with regard to central Ontario, the heart of greater Ontario, the commission has done a conscientious and sincere job. Some of the criticisms that hon. members are making of the decisions of the commission as regards the boundaries of their ridings perhaps should not be directed at the commission but rather at the people who established a formula to be used by the commission. I hope that when electoral boundaries are reviewed again they will look back at some of the suggestions put forward here this afternoon and this evening—and I do not mean just my suggestions but other very constructive suggestions that I have heard here—and they will take them into consideration when the next guidelines are set down for the electoral boundaries commission.

I have often wondered who speaks for you, Mr. Speaker, in a debate such as this. I suppose that is a privilege which one who occupies your most respected position must give up, but I want to thank you again for paying attention to my recommendations. I am sure that we will hear much from members of the other provinces. I believe that the Ontario representation has been reasonably well put forth. As I said, I was a little disappointed at some of the criticism regarding boundary ridings proposed by the commission, which was hampered by the guidelines. However, I hope it has all been constructive.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Ethier (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): Mr. Speaker, I shall be very brief because I know several of my colleagues also want to participate in this debate that affects their riding. First of all, I should like to thank the commission for having included paragraph "d" in the designation of my riding, paragraph which in part says that the regional municipality of Ottawa-Carleton is included in the riding of Cumberland.

In paragraph "d", the commission took into consideration the cultural identity of the electors of that municipality, which used to be part of the federal riding of Russell and which it will be an honour for me to serve. Moreover, I shall make it a point to meet my new electors as soon as possible. Looking over the illustrious names in that municipality such as the MacDonalds, the Boudrias, the McTeers and the Lamothe, I can assure them that I will make it a point of honour to represent them well.

Mr. Speaker, while I am pleased that this municipality has been added I nevertheless deplore the fact that the commission has deemed it advisable to leave out Russell in the name of my constituency. I can hardly understand such