

Electoral Boundaries

Mr. William Knowles (Norfolk-Haldimand): Mr. Speaker, I will not take time to read the objection which was filed. It is in Votes and Proceedings. In order more properly to understand the reasons for my objection to the report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission for Ontario as it relates to the boundaries of the Haldimand-Norfolk constituency, one must go back to the first Electoral Boundaries Commission of 1972-73 and look at the report which they presented in 1973. In preparation of its report, this commission held hearings in the city of Welland.

The elected representatives of the town of Dunnville and the adjacent townships of Canboro, Dunn, Moulton and Sherbrooke made representations at the Welland hearings asking that these areas be included in the then riding of Norfolk-Haldimand. When the commission reported in 1973, the map showed that the areas referred to above were indeed included in the proposed electoral district. Those citizens who had appeared in Welland therefore felt they had gained their point. What they did not realize was that by an act of parliament, the work of the Electoral Boundaries Commission for Ontario had been wiped out and the Norfolk-Haldimand riding had reverted back to its original boundaries. Further, these officials did not realize that a new commission had been established in 1974 to redraw the electoral districts for Ontario.

That brings us to the work of the present Electoral Boundaries Commission for Ontario and the report presently before the House, the report respecting which I have filed an objection. My objection, put simply, is that I want the present town of Dunnville, formerly Dunnville and the surrounding former townships of Canboro, Dunn, Moulton and Sherbrooke, to be included in the riding of Haldimand-Norfolk. That was where they were placed by the commission which reported in 1973. That is the wish of the elected officials of the town.

Let us now examine the decision of the Electoral Boundaries Commission for Ontario as contained in the report tabled in this House on February 27, 1976, and perhaps, more important, try to understand the reasons behind this decision. At outset, I concur completely with the change in the name of the electoral district from Norfolk-Haldimand to Haldimand-Norfolk. A mere reversing of the two parts of its name may seem of little consequence. However, to the residents of the riding it means a great deal. It removes the confusion associated with the name because this name is now the same as that of the region which was established April 1, 1975, as well as the name of the provincial constituency. This change is generally welcomed throughout the riding.

As one means of gathering facts and obtaining public opinion, the commission conducted hearings across the province. One such hearing was, again, held in Welland. A record of these proceedings shows three persons gave evidence with respect to the Haldimand-Norfolk constituency, none of whom was an elected official from the town of Dunnville. They advocated placing Dunnville in the new electoral district of Erie. The persons most knowledgeable of the wishes of Dunnville, namely, the elected officials in the persons of the mayor, deputy mayor and councillors were not present. They were not present for two very good reasons. First, they had already presented evidence to a former commission and won their point. Second, the Wel-

[The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner).]

land hearing was not advertised in the local press and they were completely unaware of the proceedings. The result of this hearing and further deliberations by the commission was to remove the town of Dunnville from Haldimand-Norfolk and place it in Erie electoral district.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I wish to set forth in detail the reasons for my objection to this removal. First, and most important, is the fact that the mayor of Dunnville and his council are unequivocally opposed to their municipality being severed from the Haldimand-Norfolk constituency. Their reasons are well set forth in their brief to the first boundaries commission, and these reasons are even more valid in 1976 than they were in 1973 because the regional municipality of Haldimand-Norfolk is now a reality. The sincerity and reasonableness of the official position can best be shown by reading into the record the brief presented by the then warden of Haldimand county to the first boundaries commission. I quote from that brief as follows:

Presentation to the federal Electoral Boundaries Commission, Welland, Ontario, Monday, February 26, 1973.

MR. CHAIRMAN: My name is Mrs. Lorna Miller of 125 Kneider Avenue in Dunnville, Ontario. I am the warden of Haldimand county and the reeve of the town of Dunnville.

I thank you for the opportunity of making this presentation which I do on behalf of the council of the county of Haldimand, the town of Dunnville and the townships of Canboro, Dunn, Moulton and Sherbrooke. The reeve of Dunn, Mr. Keith Richardson, is also in attendance this morning.

It is the strong feeling of the municipal councils which I represent here today that the municipalities of Dunnville, Canboro, Dunn, Moulton and Sherbrooke should be included in the Norfolk-Haldimand riding rather than the newly-created riding of Lincoln. I am certain, although no opinion poll has been taken, that the majority of the voters in these municipalities have the same feeling.

As you know, for the past few years the Haldimand-Norfolk study group has made a great number of detailed surveys and conducted a very comprehensive study of the two counties for the purpose of establishing regional government in Haldimand and Norfolk. During this study, all briefs and submissions made by individuals, organizations and other boards and bodies have expressed desire to remain within the boundaries of their respective two counties. Although the report has not yet been released, we are given to understand that the boundaries will remain the same, with a possible minor alteration in the west end . . .

I am not certain whether Dr. Railton, the present federal member for the riding of Welland, and Mr. William Knowles, the member for Norfolk-Haldimand, have made or will be making a submission at this time; however, I have discussed this matter with both the members and they concur with my representation here today.

We do feel that we are more closely allied, both economically, socially and politically with Haldimand county than with the region of Niagara, having been in the Norfolk-Haldimand riding until the last redistribution of seats. I would also mention that the counties of Norfolk and Haldimand make up the provincial riding.

I do not believe it necessary to go into greater detail, but do submit that it is our wish to become a part of the Norfolk-Haldimand riding, as it is for provincial elections, and ask that you give favourable consideration to the request of the elected officials and the citizens of the municipalities which I have the privilege to represent here today.

All of which I respectfully submit,
Lorna J. D. Miller.

As further evidence of the wishes of Dunnville council, I wish to put on record a resolution passed by that body on March 9, 1976, and also a letter from the clerk-treasurer of the town of Dunnville. I quote the resolution:

Moved by L. J. D. Miller, seconded by Keith Richardson: