

Redistribution

I notice also in the majority report that the parish of Petersville has been added to York-Sunbury. There is some basis for this, although I think it would be better to leave it in the constituency of Royal.

Having raised the points I wished, Mr. Speaker, I should like in closing to commend the commissioners again, all three of them, for the very conscientious and painstaking task which they have performed and I would ask them to consider seriously the arguments which have been raised by the hon. member for Victoria-Carleton, the hon. member for Charlotte and myself.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Eudes Dubé (Restigouche-Madawaska): Mr. Speaker, I did not intend to take part in this debate. Personally, I am very happy with the majority report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission for New Brunswick, at least with regard to my riding.

However, following remarks made this afternoon, I think it is my duty to make my position clear so that it will be known to my electors through *Hansard*. Since I am here, in this house, I would not like my silence to be taken as proof that I approve of the objections which have just been made.

I have often implied to my electors, to the people of my riding, that I am very happy with my riding as it is now. Besides, the population showed their regard for me on three occasions, in 1962, 1963 and in November 1965, by re-electing me every time with increased majorities. In short, I have no complaints about my riding as it is now.

However, I fully understand that under the legislation my riding is too heavily populated now—it has over 80,000 inhabitants—to remain as it is. Therefore, the riding must be amended. Since there is no getting out of it, I think that the ideal solution is the one proposed by the commission. Besides, it is the solution which had been carried out on the map submitted by the commissioners and it is the proposal accepted by the majority of the commissioners as a result of hearings in various localities in the province. According to that solution, there would now be two ridings: Restigouche, including the parish of Beresford, and the new riding of Madawaska-Victoria.

With regard to the new riding, the population is quite special and remarkable. The people in the riding of Madawaska and in part of the riding of Victoria are French-speaking. Their ancestors went up the St.

John river, crossed the Quebec boundary to settle what is called today the republic of Madawaska. That name of republic comes from the fact that this territory is located on the boundaries of two provinces, Quebec and New Brunswick, and also on the American border.

I know that people who come for the first time to that republic of Madawaska never fail to notice the good humour and hospitality which are found in that beautiful part of the country.

As I said, the republic is not bounded by the limits of Madawaska riding, but juts rather far into the present constituency of Victoria.

That is why I cannot accept that the present constituency of Madawaska be dismembered by removing the parishes of St. Léonard and St. André to incorporate them with another riding. I feel it would be splitting a family asunder because of the economics of the potato.

In short, since it is not my intention to delay discussion, I would be most happy to represent the population of my present riding for a long time to come. But I know it will not be possible under the present legislation, because the population has grown beyond the quotient. If a solution is required, I heartily endorse the one suggested by the majority of the commissioners. I am convinced they are not making a mistake and that their decision will be accepted heartily by a considerable majority of the population of the area.

● (4:10 p.m.)

[English]

Mr. Starr: I rise on a point of order. I should like to draw your attention, Mr. Speaker, and the attention of the Associate Minister of National Defence, who I see in his place together with three other members of the government, to the fact that if we are to maintain a quorum during this important debate there is some responsibility on the part of the government to see that its supporters are present in the house. I would urge the minister to endeavour to get a better representation of government members during this debate.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rinfret): May I remind the hon. member that there is a quorum in the house at the present time.

Some hon. Members: We know that.