

Electoral Boundaries

The process the commission has gone through has resulted in buildings being divided in two by the federal electoral boundary. I have this recurrent nightmare of having to draw a chalk line down the middle of some factory floor so candidates for the riding to the east, that is the riding of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, are forced to stay on one side of the factory floor, and candidates to the west, that is to say of the riding of Lachine-Lakeshore, would stay on the other side. Quite obviously that is not the way we want to try to give the people some identity of what the community is all about. I have previously approached the federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for the province of Quebec on this matter. I want to review it very briefly so that this topic can be sent to them for as much consideration as possible regarding what they might do in these circumstances.

Having indicated it would be most desirable to have the entire city of Lachine in the riding, and having also indicated that if that is not possible I would at least look forward to that being done by the time of the next but one election, I would go on to try to make some more sensible division of the riding than that which the commissioners in their wisdom have done.

Right now we have a line in the middle of the city which looks something like an arthritic dog's hind leg. I would very much appreciate the consideration of the commission in doing something a little more logical.

The area between 24th and 15th Streets in Lachine, and the one I proposed at the public hearings, which is 32nd Avenue, comprises a bloc of some 19 polls with an elector population of some 5,300 people. There would appear to be no reason why it could not be so arranged that the dividing line for the city of Lachine be moved to 32nd Avenue.

I want to make clear to other members who may be bored out of their minds with these details that I am trying to pursue the same thing we put through the Privileges and Elections Committee as guidelines for hon. members that is, that we should not have communities divided up by some mathematical calculation, the result of which is that a line is drawn down the middle of a street, when it may make sense in terms of numbers of people in the riding, but no sense whatsoever in terms of community spirit, as is the case in the particular city to which I refer, the city of Lachine.

There is every reason to assume, expect, and hope that the commission would see some sense in drawing the line down a street which is a major thoroughfare rather than a major residential street, that is, drawing the line down a street which will be a take-off point of a major highway, autoroute 13 in the province of Quebec, and drawing it down a street which is now a dual lane street. In this way we could have a heavy traffic division.

What I proposed to the commissioners is that they give some consideration to the fact that there is a natural dividing line in the community rather than the line the commissioners have drawn. In addition I have proposed to the commissioners that they give some consideration to the fact that this particular city has traditionally regarded its own east-west line as being 32nd Avenue.

When I made these representations to the commission, Mr. Justice Chevalier, who was chief commissioner, asked me to give him some figures. I do so now as a result of this

request. The difference, as I mentioned, would be approximately 5,300 voters, and about 19 polls. I would go a little further and point out that I represent a lakeshore community. If the matter of population is of concern to the commissioners they might have given some consideration to the idea of adding the city of Baie d'Urfe, which has a population of 2,200 electors and a total of some nine polls. The issue I want to refer to is not simply the mathematics of that division of the riding, but the community sense of that representation.

There is some reason to suggest, I believe, that the commission should give some consideration to historical development. I heard members yesterday and again this afternoon from the province of Ontario express extreme concern about the manner in which the boundaries commission of that province has seen fit to draw the lines in northern Ontario, reducing the representation of that northern section by one riding. In the same way I think it is worth bringing to the attention of the commission that the development of this lakeshore area is one of the most historical, contiguous, and homogeneous along the lakeshore that exists anywhere in Canada. It is my hope that the commission will see the point I make and give some reconsideration to providing boundary lines that reflect cultural concepts, historical concepts, traffic concepts, and transportation and communication concepts, rather than simply adding up a bunch of numbers and arriving at one or another particular street.

Having said all that, I want to go back to what I began with, and that is that the Quebec Redistribution Commission in my view, and I repeat again what I said earlier and confirm what the hon. member for Papineau has said, has done an excellent job. There are bound to be some of us who are discontent. I am one, but I will accept the decision. Obviously I must as I have no choice. I am governed by the law. I accept the decision of the redistribution commission, but I hope it will be shown this evening that we have problems, and I hope the commission will give second thoughts to some of those problems we are trying to examine. We represent the people and we do perhaps have more sensitive feelings about those communities we serve.

I should like to turn now to something which is going on at the moment and in terms of my responsibility as part of the organization I would reflect upon the fact that there are quite a number of Quebec members who want to speak this evening. There are also a number of western members of parliament who want to speak. I would simply indicate to members of the House that there is a list of those Quebec members who wish to speak. I dearly hope I have not spoken for too long because, if I did, that would make it difficult for me to ask my colleagues from the province of Quebec to give every consideration to other members of parliament who really do not want to sit here until four o'clock in the morning. If we can keep down our time they will be able to get to their homes earlier tonight. I thank the House for listening to me.

[Translation]

Mr. René Matte (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, before dealing with a particular area or with the boundaries of the Champlain constituency that I have the honour to represent, I should like first to speak about the general princi-