

Redistribution

Mr. Lennard: I brought it up merely because it was brought up this afternoon; that is all.

Mr. Murphy: I may as well say what I have to say on this amendment instead of waiting for another amendment which I have, and on which I will repeat what I am going to say now. I think I will be in order, at least I am told I will be.

I listened with great interest to the hon. member for Lincoln. I do not think he surprised anybody in this house. He mentioned getting letters from certain areas in the county of Lincoln. It so happens that the areas from which he got the letters were the ones we proposed bringing into the county and making it Haldimand-Lincoln. I can understand his position, as can any other hon. member, in that he would like to retain the whole county. Maybe it is too bad for the committee and for the work of the committee that he was not a member of it. We might have had some principle carried forward on a fair and equitable basis.

He gives another reason why the two areas should not be combined. He has an erosion problem. Well, I think that problem is quite common today to all ridings on the great lakes. Haldimand also has an erosion problem.

In commenting upon the various ridings the hon. member who just took his seat spoke about Welland requiring two seats and Hamilton requiring an additional seat. We have never objected to that proposal because we thought it was fair. No member on the government side of the committee can say that we did not take a fair attitude all through the proceedings of the committee. I know it was a waste of time so far as we were concerned. We could have been doing something else in the house, or we could have gone fishing.

The hon. member spoke about the size of the riding. In the last few minutes he tried to justify the Brant-Wentworth and Brantford set-up. He said they should have been dislocated as they have been, or as it is proposed. I said the other day and I repeat that if he had left Wentworth as it would have been, taking out the part that was in Hamilton, it would still have a population of over 40,000, which is much bigger than the ridings some ministers represent in this house. The riding of Brant-Wentworth could have stayed the way it was, and it too would have been a great deal bigger than some of the ridings represented by ministers in this house.

[Mr. Harris (Grey-Bruce).]

There was no occasion to change Brantford at all. The reason for the change was that there were two Tory members, one from Hamilton and one from Brant-Wentworth. And let there be no mistake about it on the part of anybody; the one and only reason for the change was to eliminate one Tory member. Why would not the argument offered by the hon. member for Lincoln apply to the county of Huron? I say they were going to apply the old cleaver and butcher knife, sticking part of it into Bruce and another part of it into North Wellington, and putting part of Perth into it. If the principle the hon. member is so proud to expound had been followed we would have had Huron intact, and no part of it would have been taken to bolster up that little riding of Wellington North, which is several thousand less than the ridings under discussion in the Hamilton and Wentworth area.

Acting as a member of the committee has been an experience I shall long remember. I got to know you, Mr. Chairman, a little bit better. And may I say as a member of the opposition that we appreciate your fairness as chairman of the committee when you grace the chair. I wish I could say the same about all members on the redistribution committee. Somehow or another personalities show up in a different way when there are different responsibilities.

I would have been satisfied with the work of the committee if we had been able to approach the problem in a businesslike manner. But it was not approached in that way. It was approached in a small, political sense, with the idea of carving up Tory seats. What happened in Ontario has happened in other areas we are now discussing. I might not have fought so hard from the very beginning for the retention of Haldimand had it not been for the fact that hon. members of the House of Commons have a very high respect, as well they might, for the hon. member who now represents that constituency.

It seems to us in the opposition that we were up against a stone wall. I made no bones about it when I said at the beginning that we were going to fight for Haldimand because we were fighting for a principle, and we were also fighting for a marvellous representative in the House of Commons. I am sorry that the time wasted in committee did not have the results we had hoped. It seems to me that when the work of this session is completed we will not have very much to be proud of in this respect.