

of Commons is to be representative, which is to stop worrying about constituencies and statistics and start worrying about communities in which human beings live.

Mr. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, this is a brief intervention made in the hope that eight or nine years from now the remarks that are being made by hon. members in this debate might perhaps be read by the people who will be in charge of the next commissions responsible for the next set of boundaries according to the law ten years hence. I should like, as others have done, to express my appreciation for the way in which the commission has carried out what is undoubtedly a difficult job when taken as a whole. In the recollection of those of us who can go back to the map published in late 1972, there is considerable improvement in the quality of the boundaries proposed in the map that is before us today for discussion.

● (1930)

It seems to me, however, that the present map could be even better had the commission made full use of the Ontario quotient figure of 81,000 plus or minus the 25 per cent provided under the law. In the case of Ontario it means that the 81,000 people per riding envisaged under the law could have been increased to a maximum of approximately 101 per cent, or decreased to a minimum of approximately 60,000 people, by the application of this 25 per cent quotient.

If you look at the proposed maps and populations for the municipality of metropolitan Toronto you are likely to come to the conclusion that the commission made little use, or perhaps even shied away from the quotient envisaged under the law. Of the 25 proposed ridings in metropolitan Toronto the population of 20 ridings ranges between 88,000 and 93,000 people. This means that the majority of the ridings proposed in metropolitan Toronto fall within a very narrow band of 88,000 to 93,000 people, almost as if the commission had somehow come to the conclusion that it is a desirable quotient for a metropolitan area from which it did not wish or intend to deviate. If my interpretation is correct, I really do not know the reasons why it applied and maintained such a narrow band.

But what seems to me fairly clear is that had the commission used the quotient provided under the law more boldly and vigorously, we would have better boundaries, and by better boundaries I mean ones that respect and reflect better values such as community of interest in the sense used earlier this afternoon by the hon. member for Nipissing (Mr. Blais), boundaries that would better reflect ethnic, cultural, and social factors and, frankly, ones that would better reflect the character of the existing neighbourhood and the role that neighbourhood organizations play in metropolitan centres across Canada. Had that quotient been used in metro Toronto as the law provides, the proposed boundaries before us here for debate would be less artificial.

I am ready to admit that ideal boundaries hardly exist in a metropolitan centre, but there are some boundaries that are less disruptive and artificial in an urban area than others, that are less disruptive to existing neighbourhoods and people than others.

Electoral Boundaries

For instance, a main artery, a major thoroughfare, or an expressway is a better boundary than a neighbourhood road or a neighbourhood street. A good boundary would be a major railroad, a park, or a cemetery, but it is very bad practice to use as boundaries, at least in the case of the municipality of metro Toronto, the so-called city limits. City limits probably had validity and meaning 40 or 50 years ago. Today city limits in metro Toronto only mean that on this side or on that side of the city limits there are heavily built up areas. The people living on streets on either side of the city limits hardly know that there is a boundary line dividing them.

I would also add to this category of poor boundary lines the streets that cut through the heart of an existing parish, or streets that are part of a tightly knit neighbourhood. As I said, our right of ways such as the CPR or the CNR are very good boundaries. So are cemeteries, parks, creeks and expressways. Major arteries are preferable as boundaries because, by their own existence, they seem to disrupt less the cohesion and character of an urban neighbourhood.

I hope that ten years from now some of the thoughts that have been put on record by hon. members will still have some validity at least in the drawing of boundaries of urban areas such as Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver. It seems to me that the success of a future boundary commission will depend, among other things, on the ability of the commissioners to take into greater consideration than has been the case so far the social factors that have been described so well earlier by the hon. member for Trinity (Miss Nicholson). As we all know, ridings and their boundaries are there to serve people, and the present law, it seems to me, is well designed. There is flexibility built into the present law, in the 25 per cent plus or minus formula that has been made available to achieve exactly some of the objectives I have tried to describe in this brief intervention.

The future commission would really do a service to people living in urban communities by making greater and bolder use of this 25 per cent formula so as to serve better the social, cultural, and economic features of the people living in the ridings affected.

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, this particular occasion is the third time I have spoken on electoral boundary redistribution since the act came into effect back in 1965-66 when I was very critical of the work of some of the boundary redistribution commissions.

In 1974-75 I was able to satisfy members on the government side of the wisdom of an amendment I had been advancing ever since the original act was passed, that was that original proposals and definite plans for redistribution and final reports must carry the full reasons of the commissioners as to why they made changes. I suppose it was a little ironic to see the difficulties into which some commissions have entered vis-à-vis members in their provinces by refusing to enter reasons. That is not the way it is to be done and I am satisfied, after three experiences, that this House has made two fundamental mistakes.

The first mistake is to think that independent commissions could carry out the redistribution of electoral boundaries better than a parliamentary committee composed of members who will see if there is any attempt at gerry-