

Electoral Boundaries Commission

strength lies in the urban areas and they believe that such a tolerance will give them the best break in those areas.

When the 1952 redistribution took place the area north of the tracks in Regina was considered to be strong C.C.F. territory. They had a Liberal representative for Regina and that area was carved off because it was thought this would make the riding safe for that representative. That area was put into Moose Jaw-Lake Centre which was represented by an unbeatable man as a C.C.F. member by the name of Ross Thatcher, who I think has something to do now with the Liberal party so far as the present campaign in Saskatchewan is concerned. The Liberals conceded that area to him and added north Regina to it, thinking that it would be a safe C.C.F. seat and that they would get rid of John Diefenbaker. He was the man at whom all this carving was really aimed. He was the man they wanted to get rid of. They wanted to assure the election of a Liberal in the one riding while conceding the other area to Thatcher. But this political manoeuvring did not work out. Neither of these ridings is represented by a Liberal and they have not been for some time. John Diefenbaker is still here. This kind of monkey business failed.

I am glad to see the matter of redistribution being referred to a non-political commission headed by a distinguished public servant in whom I have every confidence. However, I say his hands are being tied too much by the figure of 20 per cent and I hope the minister will tell the house that the government will give consideration to changing the 20 per cent to 33½ per cent.

Mr. Prittie: Will the hon. member permit a question now?

Mr. More: Yes.

Mr. Prittie: Does the hon. member realize that there is nothing in this legislation causing a reduction of seats in Saskatchewan, but that it is an automatic operation under the British North America Act?

Mr. More: There were changes made in the B.N.A. Act in 1952. No changes to help Saskatchewan at this time have been mooted.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I should caution the house that if the minister speaks now he will close the debate.

Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I really apologize to hon. members when I say that although it is customary in closing a debate to deal with all points that have been raised during the debate I am going to refrain from doing so on this occasion. I would not have risen at all except to say two things. One I had not

intended to say until the hon. member for Grey-Bruce (Mr. Winkler), the chief whip on the other side of the house, spoke. He spoke as though in some mysterious way in what we were doing the government was going to have something to do with redistribution. It is not. I think we have given every possible evidence that any government could give in the kind of legislation we have introduced and in the kind of suggestions we have already entertained for improving that legislation, that what we want to be sure of is that the government will not, any more than the opposition, have any influence on this redistribution, that the redistribution will be done by commissions that will be set up, I hope, as a result of this legislation and that it will be done fairly, bearing in mind the point I made a long time ago when we first started this debate, that after all our duty in distributing the representation in this country is to see that the people of Canada are represented, not to elect John Diefenbaker or Ross Thatcher, to mention the last two people referred to, or anybody else.

Every elector in Canada, whether he is a Tory or a Creditiste or a Liberal or a Social Crediter or an N.D.P. or a C.C.F.'er or even someone who will not join any party is just as much entitled to be represented in this house, as long as he has a vote, as any other citizen of Canada. I think we have paid far too much attention in the past, and I hope we will not in the future, to this argument about whether one party or another may get some transitory advantage. I think the hon. member for Regina City (Mr. More) did us a service in pointing out that a lot of these calculations have rather gone awry.

I might also remind the hon. member for Regina City, because I think it is only fair to recall the facts, that the amendment that was made to the British North America Act in 1952, to which he referred, was made at the instance of Mr. Louis St. Laurent and Mr. J. G. Gardiner. This amendment was made for the purpose of taking account of the very fact to which the hon. gentleman referred, namely, that the rapid urbanization that had resulted from the war had resulted in the growth of Saskatchewan not comparing with that of the other provinces, and the loss in membership that would have taken place at that time would have been inequitable, so a period of time should be allowed to elapse to see whether or not that trend would be changed.

Mr. More: I should like to say to the minister that I support him wholly. I did not want to give any idea, as a result of my remarks, that this was not so. I said the resolution came from the legislature and that