

*Redistribution*

parts of the country, there is objection to the fact that Prince Edward Island should have even four seats. As a matter of fact, it has those four seats not entirely by virtue of population but by virtue of the fact there is a protecting clause which provides that no province will have a lesser number of members in the House of Commons than it has senators.

In order to review the position very briefly, I should like to quote from a book by Norman Ward entitled "The Canadian House of Commons", at page 25. He speaks of the terms under which Prince Edward Island entered confederation, and I read:

In 1873 the island became the seventh Canadian province, and though entitled to only five members, received six because the population had increased "by 15,000 or upwards since the year 1861." These six were not protected as were the seats of the two western provinces, and in due course the operation of the British North America Act—to the great dismay of the maritime members—reduced the island's six to three.

In commenting on that the author says that the western provinces, when they entered confederation, were granted a greater number of seats than they would have been entitled to on a population basis, and there was a protecting clause in their agreement which specified that their representation in this house should never fall below that original number. In that connection the author says:

It is impossible to determine why Prince Edward Island's quota of seats was not protected.

That is all I have to say in that regard. But I do want to put on record the fact that if any change in the number of the representation in the province of Prince Edward Island should be made, that change ought to be upward. I am very pleased to see that no suggestion has been made that it should be further reduced. I am very pleased with that aspect of the situation. But I see that no change is made in the description of any of the three ridings. That brings up another point which I am a bit hesitant to speak about; nevertheless I feel constrained to express a point of view which is prevalent in the riding which I represent.

I recognize, Mr. Chairman, that there are four members in this house who represent dual ridings, three of whom are senior to me, and I respect their good judgment. I know that they too have agreed that the principle of dual ridings is at least acceptable. It is not my intention to try to change their views, or to object strenuously to the position which has been taken. Nevertheless I would not want the impression to be created that dual ridings are completely

ideal, or even approach the ideal, because they have certain inherent disadvantages.

I should like to bring that to the attention of the house at the present time and express my wish that when the next redistribution comes around the program that was instituted a number of years ago might be completed, namely the program of doing away entirely with dual ridings. As all hon. members know, there was a time when there were a fairly large number of dual ridings. They have all been eliminated with the exception of the ridings of Halifax and Queens.

When Prince Edward Island joined confederation it had six seats in the House of Commons, but three ridings. There were three dual ridings. When the representation of Prince Edward Island dropped to five, five single ridings were created. After the census of 1901 the representation dropped to four, and the dual riding of Queens was created or re-created, leaving one dual riding in the province and two single ridings.

These dual ridings have certain inherent disadvantages. To begin with they are exceptions to the general rule, and their very existence creates considerable difficulty, I would imagine, for the officials who are responsible for carrying on an election, of course chiefly the electoral officers. They require, too, that a large number of exceptions to general principles be set down in the election act, which makes for difficulty of interpretation. In addition they create confusion in the minds of many voters because, as every hon. member will recognize, in a single constituency if there are three parties represented by candidates the voter has three choices. He may vote for any one of three men; but in a dual riding if three parties are represented, it means that there are six names on the ballot, and the voter has the choice of voting for any two, which gives him 120 combinations of ways he can vote. In addition to that, because the election act is not very clear on the point, he also has the opportunity of, if you like, exercising half his franchise. He can vote for one man and it is still a good ballot, which gives him 125 choices. I mention this because these difficulties—although they would not appear to be pertinent at the moment—would be eliminated if the dual riding was eliminated, because dual ridings create these exceptions.

Having said that, I think I have perhaps sufficiently pointed out that there is a large body of opinion in the riding which I represent, representative of all political parties,