

*Electoral Boundaries Commission*

On clause 1—*Short title.*

At six o'clock the committee took recess.

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**AFTER RECESS**

The committee resumed at 8 p.m.

**Mr. Hales:** Mr. Chairman, I should like to deal with one subject in particular before we leave clause 1 of this very important bill dealing with redistribution. Before I proceed with the point with which I wish to deal—that is, one commission versus ten commissions—I think it might be in order to point out that this bill appears to be in four major parts. There are two points on which the committee seems in agreement, agreement not yet having been reached on the other two. The committee seems to be in general agreement on the non-partisan approach to this whole matter of redistribution. We appear to believe in the principle of referring the adjustment of electoral boundaries to a judicial tribunal, with rules for that tribunal. The other matter we seem to be in general agreement on is that parliament should have the final word. The two points on which we do not seem to be too close as yet, are those dealing with the percentage of tolerance to be applied, and as to whether we should have one central, national, independent commission or one commission in each province.

I should like to confine my remarks to this question of the number of commissions. I think that if we were to have ten different commissions across the country we could not help but have ten different viewpoints. We would have great difficulty in reconciling the viewpoint of say, Prince Edward Island with that of, for example, British Columbia. I think that if we were to have ten commissions we would have no continuity of thought. Uniformity would be lacking in this whole matter of redistribution. I know that the minister who introduced this bill feels that more time would be taken if we had only one commission as compared with ten. I am not so sure about this. I do not agree with him on that point. It has always been my experience that if a matter requires to be discussed in an organization of any kind, you can get the work done, and much faster, by one commission or committee than if the matter is delegated to ten different committees.

The minister has emphasized this matter of time. I do not think time is the most important consideration at this time. We should be very careful to take all the time that is necessary in order to do a good job. We

should compare this question of ten commissions versus one with a sales organization which might be considering opening up sales areas in all parts of the country. This sort of project would be mapped out in the head office. Perhaps a sales manager would go across the country to break down the sales areas; but there would be more direct and closer contact with them with a central office than if there were ten offices scattered across the country. This analogy can be applied to the question of setting up ten commissions across the country. Also, we must realize that any commission will only be as good as the men appointed to it.

Nothing has been said so far about the great duplication which is going to take place. If we have ten commissions we will require ten of everything.

Nothing has been said in this committee about the cost. It is high time someone in this committee, preferably someone on the government side, stopped and considered the cost of some of the activities being carried on in government these days. We have a great opportunity at this point to stop and think of the cost of ten commissions compared with one central, independent commission.

As hon. members are aware, the commission to be appointed in each province will be made up of four persons. There will be the chairman. No extra costs will be involved here, because his salary will be paid through the courts. Both the government appointee and the opposition appointee are to be paid. According to this bill they are to be paid a per diem rate, and also travelling and living expenses. If we take a look at the cost of the per diem, we will find that a figure of \$100 a day is what is paid by the C.B.C. to such commissions. Perhaps \$50 a day would be an average figure. If we take this figure for the two appointees, assuming that the commission was in operation for a whole year an expenditure of some \$25,000 is involved.

As I say, there would be four members to each commission. If travelling and living expenses for the ten commissions were calculated at the moderate amount of \$25 a day, this would add up to another \$25,000. Ten commissions would require ten offices. Miscellaneous expenses would also be incurred. We are going to need secretarial help in all of these offices. The representation commissioner will have to travel across the country. I have taken nominal figures for each of these items, and one single commission will cost approximately \$69,000. Multiply that by ten and you have an amount of \$690,000 representing the cost of operation of ten commissions across the country—a conservative figure, I would say.