

Redistribution

which would have taken into consideration the factors I have just mentioned. As has been indicated by the hon. member for Bow River, redistribution could have been accomplished in accordance with this principle simply by readjusting the boundaries of existing rural constituencies in order to bring those which were below the quota up to the required number and to meet the tolerances proposed in the act. Then two new constituencies could have been created by adding one each to Calgary and Edmonton to raise the total from 17 to 19.

I hope the redistribution commission in Alberta will look at this whole matter very carefully. I hope they will bear in mind what was said in the house at the time the act was passed providing for the setting up of these commissions and that they will pay careful attention to what is being said during this debate. As a result of this consideration, I hope they will recast the electoral map for the province of Alberta to bring it into a more reasonable relationship to the general principles I have outlined and which are actually contained in the act providing for redistribution.

I should like to say something about the situation in the city of Calgary itself. As pointed out by the hon. member for Bow River, the population growth in that city during the past two years has been very rapid. The census figures show it has been the most rapidly growing city in Canada on a percentage basis. At the time of the 1961 census the population was in the neighbourhood of 270,000 and at the present time it is in the neighbourhood of 340,000. This change in population, which had taken place at the time the commissioners went to work, apparently was not taken into consideration.

What was not taken into consideration particularly was the probable growth, in fact, the certain growth which was going to take place. The fact that these things were not taken into consideration in the distribution of seats proposed for Calgary will create one seat, Calgary Centre, which is entirely surrounded by other constituencies in a completely built-up area at the present time. This constituency includes the centre part of the city in which there is a large number of houses, small apartments, rooming houses and things of that kind. These buildings are being taken down every week in order to make room for a vast complex of commercial buildings and structures of that type. In other words, it is a constituency which even at the present time,

[Mr. Harkness.]

so far as numbers are concerned, does not bear a proper relationship to the other two constituencies because of the changes which have taken place since 1961. It is a constituency which will steadily grow smaller in population whereas the other constituencies will continue to expand rapidly. On this basis, therefore, you have a redistribution which is designed to perpetuate a disparity in voting power between people, depending on the part of the city in which they live.

In other words, the whole purpose of redistribution, to try to get a fair voting pattern so that there will be reasonable representation by population, is being defeated by this division in the city of Calgary which will mean a greater and greater disparity in voting power as each week and month go by. I feel, therefore, that the division in Calgary was adopted on an incorrect basis. The constituencies in Calgary should be arranged on a basis which would permit each room for growth. Each constituency should take in some of the land on the edges of the city where new houses are being erected every week. Then there would be some chance that the population of these constituencies would remain in equilibrium. Actually a more reasonable and logical way of dividing the city of Calgary would be to divide it into four quarters, northeast, northwest, southeast and southwest, each with some of the adjoining country territory attached to it. You would then have four constituencies which would have a good chance of remaining in approximately the same relationship.

I hope, too, that when the commissioners reconsider this matter one of the first things they will do will be to take into consideration the growth of the city of Calgary since 1962 and the growth that is certain to take place in the future. Then they could set up each of these constituencies on a basis that would provide them with an opportunity to continue to expand in population.

Mr. R. N. Thompson (Red Deer): In taking part in this debate, Mr. Speaker, I think I should point out it is of significance that all 17 members from Alberta are speaking with one voice in protesting what has taken place in connection with the redistribution of constituencies in that province. I hope that one result of this will be that the chairman of the National Electoral Commission and the provincial commissioners will make careful note of this fact. The experience of the sitting members for the present constituencies should provide a basis for a very important