

A few moments ago I said to an hon. member of this house what I believe to be true of western Canada more than of any other part of the dominion, namely, that it is a country where you cannot predicate a vote in the future upon what has happened in the past. It is always in a state of flux. I know nothing which is static in connection with the attitude of electors of western Canada. Communities which at one time have expressed themselves very firmly as being in favour of one political party at the next election vote very strongly the opposite way. Sometimes they vote for a third party. That has happened on more than one occasion. Under those circumstances I trust the committee realizes that having given this matter all the consideration and attention which could be given, and having arrived at definite conclusions we do not touch one constituency alone, but affect the situation in regard to other constituencies. I agree that if you took one isolated instance you might be able with some degree of fairness to say that this does not represent a fair and equitable redistribution of population. But when you consider one constituency in its relation to the others in the province, I think you will have to agree that the proposals which have been submitted are not unfair. In connection with Prince Albert it was admitted by the hon. member for Humboldt that changes had to be made. Once you admit that changes have to be made it is a question of weak, human, fallible judgment as to how they can be made so as to cause the least inconvenience and be fair to the population affected. That, we believe, has been the governing motive in connection with these matters. More largely in the west than anywhere else population has been the factor. Straight lines can be drawn much more readily than they can in the old settled communities where areas of land determine where the boundaries which have been worked out in centuries shall be made. It is difficult to say, with any degree of success, that you shall have a straight line from a line which is not straight.

All I can say is that the government has considered as fairly as it could the representations made to it. With respect to the Battlefords I can say only this. I live in the province of Alberta, and I saw the difficulty which arose between Edmonton and South Edmonton. I saw the rivalries on the two banks of the river. I have seen the same thing in the Battlefords, and I believe it is in the national interest federally, as it was provincially, that they be united. In that instance we followed the example of the pro-

vincial administration, which was not a Conservative administration, of uniting these two constituencies into one.

It will not be politically sound, they have said; we will not gain anything from it. The ex-Minister of Agriculture says we will suffer from it. But we are not thinking of that in this matter; we believe it is in the national interest that this should be. The province believed it was, the province acted on that belief, and did not act on it lightly. The province realized the force of the arguments made here, they were made then; and the province united them because these continuous jealousies such as between South Edmonton and Edmonton, between North Battleford and South Battleford, make it impossible to develop the spirit that there should be. The province accepted that view and united these two constituencies, and we have done the same.

One point made this afternoon as to which the government will be glad indeed to act on any reasonable suggestion that may be made, is in connection with the matter of names. If it is thought that the names the Battlefords and Redberry should be exchanged for other names we shall be glad to have any reasonable suggestions from the committee, and suggestions from the communities affected will be given consideration most of all. We cannot immortalize hon. gentlemen opposite by giving their names to constituencies. The right hon. leader of the opposition at least cannot complain, because one of his names finds expression in a constituency; he is one of the few members of the house of whom that can be said. Of course one of the most distinguished of Scotch names is McIntosh, but I hardly think we can substitute that for the Battlefords. Any reasonable suggestion on the part of the committee would be quite acceptable to the government. I know something of the history of Battleford, though not of course in the same degree that the hon. gentlemen do. In the very early days, thirty odd years ago, when Battleford was then an old community, it was my privilege to know two of the distinguished early settlers, one who administered justice, making Battleford the centre long before the member for South Battleford came into this country, and the other, one of the bravest men, I once heard a judge say, that he had ever come across. He was taken prisoner and sentenced to death, and when they asked him to recant he said: "You may shoot me, but always remember that the majesty of the law of this country will ultimately assert itself." I refer to the late