

Electoral Boundaries

my own experience of the evolution and expansion of that community. This experience I have acquired since 1970, first when I was an assistant to a provincial minister and representative for a riding from this area and, since 1974, as a federal member of Parliament closely linked to the development and expansion of this region.

So I urge the commission, which has refused to consider the report submitted by an ad hoc committee from Saint-Bruno and Saint-Basile and which has refused to change its first version, I urge it, following my speech tonight, to accept to review its decision. I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I thank you very much, once again, dear colleagues.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Order, please. The House will now revert to the consideration of the objections to the Report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission of the province of Ontario.

OBJECTIONS TO COMMISSION REPORT RESPECTING ONTARIO

Mr. W. C. Scott (Victoria-Haliburton): Mr. Speaker, I have listened this afternoon with interest to the arguments presented on both sides of the House describing how hon. members and their constituents feel the constituencies should be divided. Some were very fair in their criticisms while others were a little selfish.

I want to begin by congratulating the commission before which I had the privilege, along with many representatives of my riding, of appearing. I congratulate the commission on its willingness and on its openmindedness in reconsidering its proposal of last August, and in its consideration of a number of objections.

Objections in the province of Ontario numbered 203 and were presented at hearings in Toronto, Thunder Bay, London, Windsor, Belleville, Ottawa, Welland, and Sudbury. As a result of these objections there were 67 changes made. This indicates that the commissioners were thinking of the people and taking into consideration the traditional and historic links as well as the cultural activities of communities.

The county council of the county of Haliburton appeared before the commission in Belleville. Haliburton county was severed from its traditional and historical ties with the County of Victoria and put into the great riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka. We heard from the able hon. member representing that riding a few minutes ago.

It is my suggestion that there are actually next to no historical links between the County of Haliburton and the riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka. They are not linked by watersheds, land borders or anything else. In making a direct representation, the Haliburton County Council along with many other people drew this to the attention of the Commission. The commissioners listened to the view of the people. They made this change and brought it back to the County of Victoria. This made much sense because in the county the administration, the businesses, the way of life of the people, the hospitals, the medical services, the chambers of commerce, the county council, what used to be the War Measures Association, and the local municipalities have much in common. I must congratulate the commission

[Mr. Loiselle (Chambly).]

for taking this into consideration. They listened to the people and their wishes. I will have more to say about community of interest a little later.

● (2040)

The task of the commission is a most difficult one. It is impossible for a commission to come up with a solution that will be 100 per cent satisfactory to all concerned. However, when reason and common sense are injected into a problem of this nature the results often are very desirable.

Again, as I say, I think in the section of the province I have the honour and privilege to represent the commission was very favourable to the wishes of the people as far as possible. We must remember that we gave them a task to do. We gave them a formula and guidelines. They were confined to the guidelines set down by the House of Commons. They did not come up with what was altogether a solution in the first proposal. But they held hearings and made 67 changes; so they were listening. However, here we have some members criticizing them in respect of the difficult decisions they have had to reach. I must, in this regard, express my congratulations to the commissioners.

All sections of this province are different. I lost six townships through redistribution, townships which I greatly respect, and townships in which I have learned to work with the people. I knew their problems and had an understanding of the nature of life in those communities, including the expectations of the people and what would help them to live in some of the remote areas.

I must speak of the townships in North Hastings which I lost and regained in the redistribution in 1968. We had to go through the process of initiating the people into being a part of Victoria Haliburton. They were a little hesitant to come. We were new people to them. We probably operated in a different manner in respect of many of the services. But now they are a part of the community. They are very good people. However, they are now being placed in the riding of Hastings Frontenac. I am sure they will have very good representation there, but they really wonder why the change is being made. They say they have become accustomed to being in Victoria-Haliburton and wonder if they are being used as pawns. These people resent this. They do not know where they are going. I think we should pay a little more attention to the wishes of these people wherever possible. I realized it is difficult to please all people.

Another two townships involved are Rama and Mara. They were in the riding of Victoria-Haliburton when I first was elected in 1965. Now they are being placed in the riding of Simcoe. They are adjacent to the riding of Simcoe, and as much as I hate to lose them because the people there are fine people—and again they understand me and I hope I understand them—their proximity to the other riding probably means that we cannot argue too much about the change.

There is the problem of the lack of general knowledge concerning redistribution and what it is all about. I do not think the people are well enough informed about redistribution. I realize that there is the advertising in the newspapers and through other media, but possibly people do not take the time to think about the situation until it is too late