



# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Thursday, March 24, 1994**

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**Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent**

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, March 24, 1994

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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[*English*]

## PRIVILEGE

MEMBER FOR MARKHAM—WHITCHURCH—STOUFFVILLE—SPEAKER'S  
RULING

**The Speaker:** Yesterday the hon. member for Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville rose in the House to address the question of personal privilege which he previously raised on February 15 and subsequently withdrew. The hon. member claimed, at that time, that his ability to function as a member of Parliament had been impeded. He shared with the House a series of events relating to his academic credentials and qualifications, comments made about him by the media, as well as a threat by an anonymous telephone caller.

(1005)

Let me begin my ruling by defining for the House just what constitutes parliamentary privilege. Erskine May in *Parliamentary Practice*, 21st Edition, page 69, defines privilege as:

—The sum of the peculiar rights enjoyed by each House collectively—and by Members of each House individually, without which they could not discharge their functions, and which exceed those possessed by other bodies or individuals. Thus privilege, though part of the law of the land, is to a certain extent an exemption from the general law. Certain rights and immunities such as freedom from arrest or freedom of speech belong primarily to individual Members of each House and exist because the House cannot perform its functions without unimpeded use of the services of its Members—.

When any of these rights and immunities is disregarded or attacked, the offence is called a breach of privilege and is punishable under the law of Parliament.

Pursuant to our practice and convention, when the Speaker rules on a matter of privilege all that is being decided is whether the facts and evidence laid before the House are, in a *prima facie* case, sufficient to allow the usual motion to be proposed and debated over all other business leading to a decision of the

House thereon. This is clearly explained in *Beauchesne* 6th Edition, citation 26:

(2) A question of privilege—is a question partly of fact and partly of law—the law of contempt of Parliament—and is a matter for the House to determine. The decision of the House on a question of privilege, like every other matter which the House has to decide, can be elicited only by a question put from the Chair by the Speaker and resolved either in the affirmative or in the negative, and this question is necessarily founded on a motion made by a Member.

[*Translation*]

(3) It follows that though the Speaker can rule on a question of order, the Speaker cannot rule on a question of privilege. When a question of privilege is raised the Speaker's function is limited to deciding whether the matter is of such a character as to entitle the motion, which the Member who has raised the question desires to move, to priority over the Orders of the Day.

[*English*]

In other words my duty as Speaker is to decide whether the hon. member for Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville has presented sufficient argument to convince me that debate on his situation should take precedence over all other House business, and that the House should therefore consider the matter immediately.

In coming to my decision on this matter I have reviewed the decisions of many former Speakers.

Speaker Jerome in dealing with a similar case on June 23, 1977 ruled that:

—the protection of an elected person against unwarranted or intemperate publicity, even abuses or defamatory publicity, is precisely that which is enjoyed by every citizen before our courts.

[*Translation*]

He went on to add that:

As elected people we can and do expect to be the targets of attack. When those attacks seem offensive I think it is appropriate the Hon. Member is offered the courtesy of the House to extend to his hon. colleagues an explanation of the circumstances.

[*English*]

He concluded that:

—when these matters do take place, if they go beyond the point of being offensive to the point of being defamatory in a legal sense, certainly members ought to and will I am sure pursue matters through the courts.

Speaker Jerome ruled there was no *prima facie* privilege in that instance.

*Routine Proceedings*

A further case was raised on September 19, 1973. At that time the member for High Park—Humber Valley stated that he had received anonymous telephone calls warning him to cease raising questions on a certain subject. He suggested these calls amounted to attempts to intimidate him and prevent him from carrying out his duties as a member.

(1010)

Speaker Lamoureux in ruling on the matter stated the following:

*[Translation]*

The House will appreciate there is some difficulty in finding a prima facie case of privilege in circumstances where no charge has been made and there has been no suggestion in the House of any irregularity or impropriety. There is really nothing for the House or one of its committees to consider under the heading of privilege.

*[English]*

He further stated:

I am sure the hon. member for High Park—Humber Valley does not suggest that his conduct should be sent to the committee for consideration or investigation by it.

—The hon. member has indicated what the facts of the situation are—I suggest that nothing at all would be gained by having a debate, either in the House or in a committee, on the matter raised by the hon. member for High Park—Humber Valley.

*[Translation]*

To return to the present case, I have carefully reviewed the statement made by the hon. member for Markam—Whitchurch—Stouffville. Threats of blackmail or intimidation of a member of Parliament should never be taken lightly. When such occurs, the very essence of free speech is undermined. Without the guarantee of freedom of speech, no member of Parliament can do his duty as is expected.

*[English]*

While the Chair does not in any way make light of the specifics that have been raised by the hon. member for Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville, I cannot, however, say that he has sufficiently demonstrated that a case of intimidation exists such that his ability to function as a member of Parliament has been impeded. I cannot therefore find prima facie privilege at this time.

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

*[English]*

### GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

**Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in

both official languages, the government's response to five petitions.

\* \* \*

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### JUSTICE AND LEGAL AFFAIRS

**Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce):** Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.

Pursuant to the order of reference, on Monday, February 14, 1994, your committee has considered Bill C-8, an act to amend the Criminal Code and the Coastal Fisheries Protection Act (force), and your committee has agreed to report the bill without amendment.

\* \* \*

### DIVORCE ACT

**Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean):** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-231, an act to amend the Divorce Act (granting of access to, or custody of, a child to a grandparent).

She said: Madam Speaker, the motion is very simple. The bill that I am presenting today would amend the Divorce Act to grant access to grandchildren for grandparents upon divorce.

Often times in our society when families are torn apart in a divorce it is the children who are hurt the most and require someone who can help them put their world back together.

(1015)

Grandparents are a prime source of the financial and emotional assistance children need during this time in their lives. The bill will remove the obstacles which sometimes arise in a divorce that prevents grandparents from offering these resources to their grandchildren.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)

\* \* \*

### PETITIONS

#### GUN CONTROL

**Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce):** Madam Speaker, I am presenting a petition signed by 100,000 Canadians. It is part of a 200,000 name petition that asks Parliament to ban the private ownership of handguns.

This petition was launched by Concordia University after four of its professors were murdered in 1992 with an easily obtained handgun.

The petition has been endorsed by 200 broadly based organizations, including the police, which come from all across Canada.

*Routine Proceedings*

In the petition they state that the rights of society associated with the possession of handguns far outweigh any potential benefits derived from their possession.

This is a petition asking Parliament to ban the possession of handguns for private purposes.

[Translation]

GUN CONTROL

**Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert):** Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am presenting a petition from all parts of Canada dealing with gun control, especially the banning of handguns for individuals.

This petition is further to the one from the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce and is from the same source, namely Concordia University.

This petition also has 100,000 signatures and is for the same purpose, namely to ask the government to pass legislation forbidding anyone in Canadian territory to own a handgun, except for members of the Canadian Forces and peace officers in the performance of their duties.

[English]

SKOPJE

**Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra):** Madam Speaker, on the anniversary of Greek independence, I have the honour to present a petition signed by 1,200 Canadian citizens of Greek ancestry from the Vancouver region.

They ask that the government refrain from recognizing the republic of Skopje within the former communist federal state of Yugoslavia until such time as it guarantees to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of existing states as established in the treaty of Bucharest of 1913 and the World War I and World War II peace treaties.

\* \* \*

**QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER**

**Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons):** Madam Speaker, I would ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

Also, due to a misunderstanding the minister for heritage was unavoidably detained and arrived late for the tabling of documents and statements by ministers. I am wondering if the House would give its consent to revert to tabling of documents and then to statements by ministers to allow the minister to make a statement.

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** Shall all questions stand?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** We are returning to statements by ministers.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**PARKS CANADA**

**Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage):** Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report entitled "Guiding Principles and Operational Policies for Parks Canada".

(1020)

Following the tabling of this document, I will make a ministerial statement to inform members of this House of the government's vision regarding the future of national parks and historic sites, as well as the promotion and development of our identity and national heritage.

Madam Speaker, this is a special day for all Canadians. With the tabling of the Parks Canada "Guiding Principles and Operating Policies", yet another step is taken in entrenching and securing the national heritage of Canada.

It is a rare day in any democracy when a minister can table principles and policies for a nation in the full knowledge that two other colleagues now sitting on the side opposite have participated in their formulation.

I would like to acknowledge the roles played by the Leader of the Opposition, the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean, and the hon. member for Sherbrooke, now the leader of the Progressive Conservative Party. To have such a consensus regarding a policy is a rare occurrence indeed.

[English]

As Canadians, we value our freedom, our clean environment, the beauty and natural wilderness and the paths of human endeavour which have brought us to where we are today. The sense of wonder and reverence we feel as we learn about past human activities that have laid the foundation of our country stimulate a profound concern for ensuring the survival of historic places, artefacts and structures.

Despite pressures on our environment and on our heritage resources Canadians should be assured that our national parks and national historic sites will be protected and well managed for future generations to enjoy. Our national parks and national historic sites will not be worn down or worn out through overuse or neglect.

Of course since the last policy statement in 1979 there has been a greater sense of urgency in the Canadian public on environmental, ecological and heritage matters. There has been a swell of public sentiment nationally and internationally

*Routine Proceedings*

creating an expectation of leadership in the care of the environment and preservation of natural and cultural heritage.

[*Translation*]

According to recent surveys, 90 per cent of Canadians want to have more information about our country's history. The national historic sites and related heritage programs go a long way toward filling this knowledge gap.

Each year, one-third of Canadians travel to participate in heritage activities across the country. Canada's national parks and national historic sites are cornerstones of our domestic and international tourism industry. More than 30,000 jobs are associated with Canada's national parks and historic sites. They make a contribution to our national economy in excess of one billion dollars per year.

Parks Canada, through its application of the principles and policies, will maintain the integrity of natural and cultural heritage, while ensuring that parks and sites continue to play a major role in the local, regional and national economy. It will do this by ensuring that the management decisions affecting these special places are made on sound and scientifically based knowledge.

[*English*]

The programs administered by Parks Canada will continue to have positive impacts on local communities. They will create jobs and assist sustainable land use and ecotourism.

(1025)

Highlights of the new Parks Canada policy include:

First, an update of the Parks Canada mandate to include its responsibilities for national parks, national historic sites, historic canals, heritage railway stations, Canada's heritage rivers, marine conservation areas and federal heritage buildings;

Second, guiding principles stressing that natural and historic qualities will be maintained, that Canadians will be involved and consulted, and that an orderly framework is provided for the addition of new heritage areas; and

Third, a renewed emphasis placed upon partnership and co-operation with other levels of government, communities and the private sector.

[*Translation*]

This does not mean shifting the responsibility for preserving and creating Canada's heritage to others. Our history, traditions, and the environment require partnerships for implementation of successful heritage programs and, ultimately, a stronger leadership role for Parks Canada, nationally and internationally, that will demonstrate and advocate environmental and heritage ethics and practices.

National parks and national historic sites are symbols of the Canadian identity and make all Canadians proud. In fact, I am making this speech in what is designated as one of Canada's

national historic sites. And next to the Parliament buildings is one of the ends of the Rideau Canal, one of Canada's heritage waterways, administered by Parks Canada and subject to these new policies.

[*English*]

On that positive note I conclude my remarks on the Parks Canada guiding principles and operating policies.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata):** Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity, as we debate Parks Canada "Guiding Principles and Operating Policies" tabled today in this House, to reaffirm that the Bloc Québécois will spare no effort to ensure that the beauty of Quebec's and Canada's wilderness is preserved.

The minister was so kind as to remind the people of Quebec and Canada what a key, positive role the Leader of the Opposition has played in protecting our national heritage, and I thank him for that.

But the minister is no doubt aware that the Bloc Québécois does not intend to just stand by if the government is remiss in preserving the cultural heritage of Quebec and Canada. I am convinced that, now more than ever, he knows that the Bloc Québécois will be every bit as vigilant with respect to natural heritage.

When the Leader of the Opposition was minister of the environment, he stated and I quote: "One of the areas in which the department is involved that I always find rewarding is the parks system. Parks Canada represents such beauty and positive things and is such a success that it is always encourages me to carry out my duties. It is one of Canada's greatest achievements, one which is recognized throughout the world. People must realize that our parks system is not only a beautiful sight for us. Other countries envy our national parks system".

In fact, Canada with its parks system is considered as a leader by conservation agencies world-wide. It is fitting for Parks Canada to be a source of inspiration for all future Canadian environmental policies.

The Bloc Québécois will make sure that the government fulfils its commitment to implement the concept of sustainable development, as stated in the final report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, the Brundtland Report, entitled "Our Common Future".

It should be pointed out that, based on the concept of sustainable development, economic development must be compatible with the long-term preservation of unmanaged ecosystems and survival processes. In Quebec and Canada, we have known for over a century that this wilderness must be preserved, not only for its unmistakable aesthetic beauty, but also because of the causal relationship to be made between what we do in that area and the benefits to be derived in terms of the environment.

(1030)

We therefore had to reconcile tourism and economic development with environmental protection. Parks must be developed to create jobs in tourism, of course, but never at the expense of future generations.

As you know, there is still a lot to do. The national park network must be completed. Canada's 39 ecoregions attest to its riches and diversity. It would therefore be advisable to establish a park representing every ecoregion.

We will improve and extend the national park network and pay particular attention to the protection of the Arctic environment. As you know, some planned park sites in the Arctic had to be given up because of mining concessions. We must take environmental repercussions into account every time a government project or program is undertaken.

Thousands of jobs are tied to the preservation of this natural heritage. We must also ensure that these sites are impeccably managed, that expenditures are justified, and that includes official residences, of course.

Finally, we emphasize the minister's commitment regarding partnership and co-operation with other levels of government. As he probably knows, Quebec did not get its fair share of national parks. The government must step up its efforts to give Quebec its fair share while respecting its prerogatives and priorities.

The government must resolve all jurisdictional conflicts by co-operating with Quebec, the other provinces and the territories, particularly by taking into account the concerns of local communities. It must seek the direct involvement of Natives when it is needed.

In closing, regarding Parks Canada's updated mandate, may I remind you that the Bloc Québécois is happy that the mandate has been updated and that the ten guidelines on protecting our historic and natural heritage are being tabled today. We will, of course, examine this document carefully.

Finally, let us recall that this work was undertaken at the Department of the Environment under the leadership of the Opposition Leader when he was minister. He put his stamp of quality on it. His successor only has to follow in his footsteps.

[English]

**Mrs. Sharon Hayes (Port Moody—Coquitlam):** Madam Speaker, I too would like to congratulate the hon. Minister of Canadian Heritage on his presentation of the Parks Canada guiding principles and operating policies. It is a result of a much needed process. We agree that with the stress on the preservation of the natural and cultural heritage and the care of our environment, it is now of all times crucial to Canada to have fresh insight into our identity and our vision as a country. This indeed will be inspired by a fresh appreciation of our lands and the

### *Government Orders*

recognition of the importance of exploring and developing, renewing and conserving our natural resources and the physical environment.

Any discussion of the management and preservation of our natural heritage though leads us to the complex relationship of the healthy environment and the human activity that must go around that relationship. Federal leadership is necessary in the integration of the economic, the human and the environmental factors.

I suggest three considerations should be kept in mind: First, the development of the ideas and the directions of this proposal must be a balanced approach with equal weight in any decision given to the economic, the social and the technical considerations. Second, the operational and management decisions of any mandate should be based on sound management philosophies, structures, procedures and planning. Third, the very great importance of communication and partnership with any mandate with all provincial governments equally, with private industry, with educational institutions and the public itself to maximize the benefits to all of these.

(1035)

Parks Canada now has a mandate that should be an example of environmental stewardship and of economic stewardship both nationally and internationally because as we seek to serve all Canadian taxpayers, we need wise management. Those Canadians are wage earners and consumers, therefore we need consideration for jobs and resource management. Those Canadians are citizens of a proud country that has been blessed with a rich heritage and with amazing beauty.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** I wish to inform the House that pursuant to Standing Order 33(2)(b), because of the ministerial statement Government Orders will be extended by 14 minutes.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

### ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES READJUSTMENT SUSPENSION ACT, 1994

BILL C-18—MOTION FOR TIME ALLOCATION

**Hon. Fernand Robichaud (Secretary of State (Parliamentary Affairs))** moved:

That in relation to Bill C-18, an Act to suspend the operation of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act, not more than one further sitting day shall be allotted to the consideration of the second reading stage of the bill and, fifteen minutes before the expiry of the time provided for government business on the allotted day of the second reading consideration of the said bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this Order, and in turn every question necessary for the disposal of the second reading stage of the bill shall be put forthwith and successively without further debate or amendment.

*Government Orders*

[English]

**Mr. Hermanson:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order to make a request of the Chair and to make a comment.

This House has been recognized as being one without precedent by the fact that there are two new parties and 200 new members in this House. In light of time allocation being imposed upon this House, the reputation of all members is at stake.

The vote on second reading of Bill C-18, an act to suspend the operation of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act, is being restricted and, therefore, it will reflect—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** I am sorry. I do not feel that is a point of order.

**Mr. Hermanson:** Madam Speaker, I was in the process of trying to lay some foundation for a request I would like to make to the Chair. Do I not have—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** I am afraid you were in the process of debate, sir. Would you please get to your point.

**Some hon. members:** Put the question.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** A motion has been moved and I am obliged to put the question to the House. This is not a debatable motion.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** In my opinion the yeas have it.

*And more than five members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** Call in the members.

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

*(Division No. 23)*

## YEAS

## Members

Adams	Alcock
Allmand	Anawak
Anderson	Arseneault
Assad	Assadourian
Augustine	Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Bakopanos	Barnes
Beaumier	Bellemare
Berger	Bertrand
Bethel	Bevilacqua
Bhaduria	Blondin—Andrew

Bodnar	Bonin
Boudria	Brown (Oakville—Milton)
Brushett	Bryden
Bélair	Caccia
Calder	Campbell
Cannis	Catterall
Chamberlain	Clancy
Cohen	Collenette
Collins	Cowling
Crawford	Culbert
Dhaliwal	Dingwall
Dromisky	Duhamel
Dupuy	Easter
Eggleton	English
Fewchuk	Finestone
Finlay	Fontana
Fry	Gaffney
Gagliano	Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Galloway	Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier)
Gerrard	Godfrey
Goodale	Graham
Gray (Windsor West)	Guarnieri
Harb	Harper (Churchill)
Harvard	Hickey
Hubbard	Ianno
Iftody	Irwin
Jackson	Jordan
Keyes	Kirkby
Knutson	Kraft Sloan
Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Paul)	LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
Lee	MacAulay
MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys)	Maloney
Marchi	Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Massé	McCormick
McKinnon	McTeague
McWhinney	Mifflin
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)	Mitchell
Murphy	Murray
Nault	O'Reilly
Ouellet	Pagtakhan
Payne	Peters
Peterson	Phinney
Pillitteri	Proud
Reed	Regan
Richardson	Rideout
Ringuette—Maltais	Robichaud
Rompkey	Scott (Fredericton—York Sunbury)
Serré	Shepherd
Sheridan	Simmons
Skoke	Speller
St. Denis	Steckle
Stewart (Brant)	Stewart (Northumberland)
Szabo	Telegdi
Terrana	Thalheimer
Tobin	Ur
Valeri	Vanclief
Verran	Volpe
Walker	Wells
Whelan	Wood
Young	Zed—140

## NAYS

## Members

Asselin
Bellehumeur
Bernier (Gaspé)
Blaikie
Brown (Calgary Southeast)
Canuel
Chrétien (Frontenac)
Cummins
de Jong
Deshaies
Duceppe

*Government Orders*

Duncan	Epp
Forsyth	Frazier
Gauthier (Roberval)	Gilmour
Godin	Gouk
Grey (Beaver River)	Guay
Guimond	Hanrahan
Harper (Calgary West)	Harper (Simcoe Centre)
Hart	Hayes
Hermanson	Hill (Macleod)
Hoepfner	Jennings
Johnston	Lalonde
Landry	Langlois
Lebel	Leblanc (Longueuil)
Leroux (Shefford)	Marchand
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	McClelland (Edmonton Southwest)
McLaughlin	Meredith
Mills (Red Deer)	Morrison
Ménard	Paré
Picard (Drummond)	Plamondon
Pomerleau	Péloquin
Ramsay	Riis
Ringma	Rocheleau
Sauvageau	Schmidt
Scott (Skeena)	Silye
Solberg	Solomon
Speaker	Strahl
Taylor	Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)
Venne	White (Fraser Valley West)—78

PAIRED MEMBERS

Members

Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	Bouchard
Canuel	Caron
Cauchon	Chan
Copps	Dalphond—Guiral
DeVillers	Dumas
Fillion	Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)
MacLaren (Etobicoke North)	Mercier
O'Brien	Parrish
St-Laurent	Young

(1115)

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** I declare the motion carried.

\* \* \*

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES READJUSTMENT  
SUSPENSION ACT

The House resumed from March 21, consideration of the motion that Bill C-18, an act to suspend the operation of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee; and of the amendment.

**Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River):** Madam Speaker, I finished my speech the other night at 6.42 and I am certainly open to questions and comments.

**Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West):** Madam Speaker, I listened with great interest the other night to the speech of the hon. member for Beaver River who talked extensively about her riding. We all remember the time she was first elected in the House to represent the new riding of Beaver River. I had the honour of being her assistant at that time and of assisting her in planting the flag of Reform in the House of Commons. That was

a momentous day. Obviously she feels very strongly about some of the proposed changes under the current scheme for her riding.

I was concerned during her speech on Monday. Some comments were hurled across the way which maybe do not appear in the *Hansard* transcript. They really raised questions about the partisanship or lack of partisanship and integrity of Elections Canada and its senior officials. There were a number of comments hurled across the way to the effect that Elections Canada was a partisan body. Its members have strong affiliations to another political party which is no longer recognized in the House.

The hon. member for Beaver River has been a member since 1989. She has run in two elections and a byelection. Could she comment at some length on her experiences with Elections Canada as a candidate and as a lone member of Parliament for a good deal of time? Did she find that Elections Canada was a partisan organization, that it had that kind of orientation, or was she happy with her dealings with that organization as an independent member and now as a Reform member?

**Miss Grey (Beaver River):** Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his remarks. It is nice to have him as a colleague again in the House of Commons, this time as a fellow member of Parliament.

He has asked me to address the issue of how I feel about Elections Canada. Before I answer the question I might just answer how I felt about some of the remarks that were being hurled across the House. I suppose I was partly amused but also partly saddened by the consistent comments of the member for Vancouver South. He kept saying loudly across the House as I was speaking the other night: "I will lose my riding as well. It is not just Beaver River that is going to be dismantled". The member for Vancouver South was saying that his riding would also be dismantled.

(1120)

That is all well and fine, but we need to draw the distinction in the House that it could be one reason the government is trying to ram the bill through so quickly, because he stands to lose his seat. I am in the position of standing to lose my constituency as well. In other words I will not have a place to run in the next election if I choose to run again.

That is why I think it is more important for someone in this party who stands to lose a constituency not to be so self-serving as to say: "Yes, let us put the whole process off". Then I would be serving my own interests and saying: "Whew, I am safe. I can carry on". There is a real discrepancy when someone from the other side was hollering: "I will lose my seat". It would be perfectly natural then for him to support his government on railroading the bill through Parliament and putting the whole process on hold. There is a real difference of opinion there. As a



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matter of principle I am against it even though I stand to lose as well through this process.

My dealings with Elections Canada have always been very good. I have run in two general federal elections as well as one byelection in the spring of 1989. Even though I was treated as somebody who was almost literally a kook in western Canada because I represented a new political party that nobody had ever heard about and nobody knew anything about it, I must say the people at Elections Canada were most fair with me in the general election of 1988 and in the byelection of 1989 when we surprised Elections Canada and the whole country of Canada from sea to sea when I took 50 per cent of the vote.

Since then obviously my party has gained a great deal of strength and steam across the country. When I ran as only one of 200 and some candidates in the general election of 1993 we had undergone the process which is very general and very basic. People were appointed as returning officers in their constituencies. We underwent that in Beaver River because the previous returning officer had retired. We were subject to a new returning officer, Mr. Lorne Assheton-Smith from St. Paul. Those are political appointments, as we all know. I will send this comment in *Hansard* to Mr. Lorne Assheton-Smith, the returning officer from Elections Canada in Beaver River, indicating that he treated me fairly as a candidate and I have absolutely no criticism whatsoever of Elections Canada.

The criticism I would have is not of the whole situation. Maybe it is political to an extent with the Electoral Boundaries Commission, but the question on everybody's lips is: if they think they are replacing Tory hacks with something better, heaven help government members who are ramrodding the legislation through. They will do so at their own peril if they replace them with hacks of another political party who they think might serve their interests better. I think all of us would be ashamed to see that happen.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Fernand Robichaud (Secretary of State (Parliamentary Affairs)):** Madam Speaker, I can assure the hon. member for Beaver River that we certainly will not do what she assumes we will do when it is time to appoint people to these commissions, because this is a very independent process, and we certainly intend to abide by this principle.

However, if I remember correctly what she said in her speech a few days ago, she did not entirely agree with the current process. She also said that in her presentation to the commissions, she would also express her dissatisfaction and mention certain changes she would like to see.

She invited her constituents to do likewise. The hon. member must know that the commission appointed to review the boundaries of her electoral district does exactly that, in other words, it receives submissions on new or existing boundaries and is not at all concerned with the current process.

(1125)

My point is that if the hon. member comments on the process, it will be a waste of time. Giving hon. members an opportunity to do so, and the public as well, because the committee that reviews the entire process will certainly ask members of the public to come and testify, is the whole purpose of this bill.

[*English*]

**Miss Grey:** Madam Speaker, we are talking about particulars the commission has come up with. Yes, I make no bones about it. I think there are real weaknesses in that and I think Beaver River deserves a longer life than it has had.

As I mentioned in my remarks the other day, it was a brand new constituency in 1988. Will it just evaporate into thin air? I do have problems with that. We have had negotiations with the government but I have no guarantees. What guarantee do I have that the system the government is talking about will be better? It has not given us any options. It has not said that it wants to move in this direction.

Yes, it makes me nervous. I am not going to sign on to something with my party and say: "Sure, let us come up with something that may be just as politically motivated". Canadians would be really frustrated with that. Even though I am frustrated with the proposals that are in place and I said that I would be going to the hearings, I suspect now I am not going to have a chance when I see the government bringing in time allocation. If it is talking about the process it wants to take part in being so important, why do we need to have it shot through Parliament faster than the speed of light?

I sat in the House and my friend from the riding of Kamloops has sat here too, listening to dozens upon dozens of members who are on the government side now screaming against the Tories last time all the dreadful things about time allocation. I can hardly believe it when I look across the aisle now. Is this the most important thing in Canada right now? Is this what this government is going to be proud of down the road? Will it be saying: "This is what we forced time allocation on. The biggest issue of the day was electoral boundaries"? I hardly think so.

I wanted a guarantee that some better process would be in place. If this is going to take place, as I suspect the government will be ramming it through, I would like a guarantee as a Canadian citizen and as a member of Parliament in the House that whatever changes the government makes it may grandfather them and put them into the life of the next Parliament after this

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one so its fingerprints will not be all over it as the author of perhaps what might be its own demise.

**Mr. Andrew Telegdi (Waterloo):** Madam Speaker, I want to make sure the preachers on that side of the House have the benefit of what I have to say. Unlike the last two occasions I certainly hope they will actually ask me some questions.

Just to touch on the comments of the member for Beaver River, she said she was amused and saddened. She wants a guarantee that whatever the government comes up with will be better. That is what the bill embarks on.

Let me say to the member that the reason we have to deal with the issue this week given our recess is that if we do not do so we will put in place a very costly process of having reviews on boundaries that will not decrease the number of seats in the House or maintain the number of seats in the House but will increase the number of seats in the House by a total of six. I say that because much is being said by the big *R* Reformers about this bill being rammed through. What we have is a filibuster. The local media in my community was very upset by what was to transpire even though under the present situation Ontario would gain four more seats. We want to look at the number of seats in this Chamber. I can tell members that we should have the opportunity to do that.

(1130)

We do not get the light every day on this side of the House. Therefore we are unable to take a complex issue such as this and give the members from the big *R* Reform Party assurance that we can do it that speedily. We will send the bill to committee where the members of the Reform Party can come forward as well as every other member in every party in the House. They will be able to bring us the reaction of their constituents. They will be able to ask some of their constituents to be witnesses and over a period of time we will come up with something better.

As I was looking at making a presentation today, I took the opportunity to review what all members who spoke on the issue had to say this past Monday. I can tell members that I feel somewhat amused on the one hand and saddened on the other.

It never ceases to amaze me how the members of the big *R* Reform Party, the ones that always preach free votes go ahead and do the opposite and vote as a block. One would think they were tied together with Krazy glue. Perhaps when they go through the exercise of coming up with a code of conduct, one of the things they will definitely do is use Krazy glue.

Watching them in the House, I am very much reminded of another great neo-Conservative, Margaret Thatcher, who is passé now. I am reminded of another person. The Reform Party members very much have a soulmate in the former President of the United States, Ronald Reagan. He got elected promising to

cut the deficit and the debt. Of course the United States of America became the biggest lender nation in the world when the new right took control as the Reform dream about. He took the country from the biggest lender to the biggest debtor. However something that Ronald Reagan said is applicable here. It is that phrase he always used so well, "there they go again".

Any time I review debates by the Reform Party that certainly is the impression I get, there they go again. Let them preach. Let them be sanctimonious. Do not give credit on any of the initiatives.

When I reviewed the debates one of the things I found was that for the most part they admitted they do not want to change the size of the House of Commons.

Interestingly enough, there was not one person who would support it because if we stay with the status quo, we will definitely change the House of Commons by six members which will cost us a million dollars a member. If one starts multiplying \$6 million by 10 years one has \$60 million. Then one continues on and keeps adding members to the House of Commons.

Certainly that was not what my constituents told me they wanted to see done. My constituents told me they want us to do more with less and to make the House operate more effectively.

(1135)

Let us be very clear we are talking about ramrodding a bill, and we are talking about that. If we did not use time allocation on the bill, we would not have the opportunity to change those costly hearings that are going to take so much time and energy on the part of Canadians. I think that is an important point to know.

The suggestion has been made that the bill by the government came through the back rooms of the Liberal caucus, that it did not see the light of day with constituents, that somehow it was all politically manipulated.

As soon as the electoral boundaries readjustment proposal for the province of Ontario was put in place I received numerous calls from constituents. I have had discussions with people representing local governments. I was in the process of drafting a private member's bill on this issue which called for representations by members of the House of Commons without increasing the total number of members. I was reflecting what my constituents were telling me which was restricting the number to at least the present size.

We also wanted to talk about making sure that the community of interest represented by ridings was maintained. When I read through the debates, I noted that the member for Beaver River said that her riding would disappear and it only had the opportunity to go through two elections.

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I read some other contributions from members of the Reform Party who said that there is not one Canadian, not one constituent that is upset with the proposals. I have to tell them that they are wrong.

Back on December 17 the local paper, the Kitchener–Waterloo *Record* stated in a story “if you live in Kitchener, Waterloo or Cambridge and think you have trouble now figuring out who your MP is, just wait until the new election if proposed riding boundary changes come into effect.

If the changes proposed by the Federal Election Boundaries Commission for Ontario are accepted parts of Kitchener will be tacked on to Waterloo riding, parts of Waterloo will be attached to a largely rural riding, North Dumfries will be cut away from Cambridge and part of Cambridge riding that used to be part of the Kitchener riding will go back to Kitchener”. I am going to spare you by not reading the whole story but it goes on and on.

Let me talk about what some of the civic leaders have to say. Waterloo Mayor Brian Turnbull said he is really disappointed in a redistribution that would see a large part of the city included in largely a rural riding that has no historical ties to this part of the province.

Woolwich township Mayor Bob Waters said he intends to fight redistribution. I was talking to Mayor Lynn Myers of Wilmot township which by the way was taken out from the Waterloo region in the last redistribution process. I would like to see a joint submission.

Now what did Mayor Myers say, whose riding was taken out of the Waterloo region? Lynn Myers bluntly said “Wilmot is not happy in the riding of Perth—Wellington—Waterloo”. Now he is worried about being lumped into a new urban riding that has no natural ties, has an unholy alliance and it would be an unhistoric alliance. He said that ever since redistribution he hated every minute of it. That certainly is reflective of many of the constituents involved.

(1140)

There was a story in the K–W *Record* yesterday that headlined that Reform is filibustering, which is exactly what they are doing. The editorial reads:

Common sense does take hold in Ottawa from time to time. Thank goodness it has finally asserted itself over the issue of federal electoral redistribution. The public is in no mood to pay millions of dollars to implement new boundaries that, as far as the Waterloo region is concerned, make no sense. Nor are people eager to shell out more money to expand the number of members of Parliament.

The ruling Liberals have wisely asked the Bloc Quebecois and Reform Party to consider a joint suspension of redistribution until a parliamentary panel can study the desired size of the House and the number of seats for each province.

It certainly does not sound like a community where nobody is upset.

I know my friends in the Reform Party like petitions. We have thousands of signatures on a petition which supports the proposals in my private member’s bill. As this thing goes through over the course of the next two years there will be, I dare say, thousands and thousands more. Who knows, maybe the members of the Reform are just waiting for that one phone call from a Canadian to be inspired. Maybe one Canadian will phone and inspire them to start thinking about the issue, start thinking about the actions we are taking today.

I would like to reiterate this because I think it is important. If we did not act this week we would have those costly and useless hearings held, if it were ever suspended, which would inconvenience civic politicians, citizens and certainly every member of the Chamber would be spending time at those hearings.

Therefore, it is not a question of whether we agree with the electoral commission in the sense that we think it did a good job. Given its mandate it has no choice in holding the line on the seats in the House of Commons. That is not an option. That option belongs to politicians.

I despair to a large extent when I listen to the member for Beaver River. She talked about the dirty fingerprints of politicians. Every member of the House is a politician. Some would like to be preachers and have their Sunday sermons and others would like to spend their time on codes of conduct, but Canadians elected them to bring their best judgment here. They were elected as politicians. I can only say to them that by forever questioning the ethics of this Chamber they do a great disservice to this Chamber which is the greatest Chamber of debate in the country.

I do not know what happens in the strategy room of the Reform Party but I do know what happens in caucus at the Liberal Party. First, let me state that in the Liberal Party we do not spend our time looking at codes of conduct for our members. There is the assumption that we are equal and that we know how to run our lives. We do not pretend to be holier than the average citizen. We are here to try to reflect and represent this country. I hear my friends say that we should.

(1145)

Let the Reform Party be unanimous in their code of ethics. Let them have a free and open debate on it. We would be very much entertained. I am sure it would remind us of the great Jimmy Swaggart hour on Sunday mornings.

I mentioned before that funny things happen during election campaigns. In my riding of Waterloo a person who ran for city council and did not succeed—actually he came after me in the election—was a Reform candidate. This individual now fills my seat on Waterloo city council.

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I have a great deal of respect for him. I could not quite understand what happened to him that he was a Reform candidate. Certainly some of the things he said did not make a great deal of sense.

However he has supported the infrastructure program for the city of Waterloo. He found good reasons to support it because he saw that the work being done was good for the community and good for the country.

Let me share this with you. It was moved by Councillor Connolly, seconded by Councillor Hoddle at the February 21 meeting of council in Waterloo, that the present recommendations of the Federal Elections Boundary Commission for Ontario, of boundary changes to ridings in the Waterloo region be redrawn and new boundaries be discussed with all Waterloo regional municipalities and its members of Parliament to arrive at a solution that keeps our region in tact. It was passed unanimously.

Therefore there is a great deal of support for what this government is doing. If we did not have to forever listen to and argue with members on the preaching of sanctimony versus reason we could have a committee composed of members of the House of Commons. In the period of two years we could certainly come up with something better. In that way this House would work much, much better.

I am supporting this bill because not to do so would mean supporting the status quo. That is why I call them big *R* Reformers; they do not act like reformers even though they call themselves Reformers.

**Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena):** Madam Speaker, I heard the hon. member casting disparaging remarks about the Reform Party. He likens us to Ronald Reagan who was elected as President of the United States on the promise of reducing the deficit and trying to get the massive debt under control.

There is a different system of government in Canada from what the Americans have in the United States. In Canada the executive branch and the legislative branch sit together whereas Mr. Reagan had to contend with the Democrats who dominated the Congress. In this government and in this Parliament the executive and the legislative branches are one and the same. Therefore they have much more power and ability to deal with deficits and debt than Mr. Reagan did.

Does the member recognize and acknowledge that fact?

I listened to the hon. member's remarks on fighting redistribution and heard that there was an uproar in his constituency over this proposed redistribution. I do not hear that uproar in my riding nor do I hear it in Canada. I do not see it on the front pages of the newspapers; I do not hear it being discussed. I continue to

believe mightily it is an issue for members of Parliament much more so than it is an issue for Canadians.

(1150)

I agree that one issue which is important to Canadians is the expenditure of money. The almost \$5 million which has been spent to date will be lost if this government motion succeeds.

Furthermore, if the government is serious about capping the number of seats then why is it not clearly stated in the bill that the number of seats will be capped? If that were stated, the bill would probably have the support of the Reform Party but it is not. There is just a vague acknowledgement that the steadily increasing number of MPs will be looked at, but there is no commitment to stop it.

I ask the member for his comments on that.

**Mr. Telegdi:** Madam Speaker, I certainly know of the separation of powers in the United States of America. I also have had the good fortune to read the book by the leader of the Reform Party. I certainly understand there is a close attachment to the new conservatism that has died out in Great Britain and the United States. Certainly the president had a great deal of monetary policies to do with the incredible increase in the debt of the United States. Let us be very clear on that.

The other point raised suggests that I cast aspersions that were demeaning to the Reformers. I get *Quorum* like everybody else and I see reference to their code of conduct. There is a member of Parliament who refuses to dine alone with a woman even on a professional basis. Another columnist talks about the pious Reform caucus with a score of MPs more righteous and apt at sermonising than Preston Manning. Another columnist writes that now some holier than thou Reformers are putting together their own code of behaviour. Who am I to say? I just read it and some of it must be correct.

I have nothing against Reformers personally. Mr. Connolly was a candidate against me in the last election. We got along great on many issues and personally we get along very well, but something does happen when they get into that group, close the doors and decide on debate.

The member also raised the matter of money. He said that \$5 million had already been spent. That is correct, but if we continue with this process we are going to spend \$3 million more. If we put in six new members of Parliament we are going to spend \$6 million more every year.

If we continue with the process in the longer term we are going to keep adding members to the House of Commons. We would be knocking out those walls and the Reformers would need binoculars to see the Speaker. Therefore time is of the essence. We have to deal with this issue very quickly. However I will be fighting very strongly to maintain the number of members of Parliament at 295.

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I mentioned the subject of my private member's bill. I am willing to have everybody in this House and in committee sit down to see how we can improve this place to better reflect the constituents whom we represent. This must be dealt with in a serious fashion. It must not be used as an opportunity to filibuster. My wish and my hope is that we will come up with a bill that is a great improvement over the one we presently have.

**Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot):** It always makes me wonder when a member of the House stands up and criticizes other parties and other members as to what their motivation is rather than defending the bill his party has put forward.

(1155)

It reminds me of question period when the Official Opposition presses the government too closely on an issue. It continues to drag up the old story that the Leader of the Official Opposition was a member of the former government. Whenever that happens it tells me that they are getting close to something the government does not want to discuss and the pressure is being placed on it by the Official Opposition.

When the member stands up and spends at least 50 per cent of his time criticizing the Reform Party it makes me wonder what he is afraid of. If the big *R* Reform movement in his constituency is not already pressing him a little too closely, four years from now he really will have something to worry about.

Nevertheless if this bill contained the means by which the number of members in this House would be capped, then as my colleague who asked the question before me stated there would be support for that in the Reform Party caucus. That is what we stand for. We do not need more representation across this country; we need better representation, representation that we have not received from either the Liberal or the Tory governments.

When we talk about debt it is his government that began that enormous slide into the debt hole. It left us with over \$200 billion and another \$300 billion was added by the Tory government. Now we are at a point where organizations like the Fraser Institute will not advise us. They say we may have gone too far and we may face a debt crisis that is beyond our control.

Will the member address the reason the capping of the number of members in this House is not within the bill itself. To me it is a farce when he stands up and talks about capping the number of members in this House because it ought to be in the bill but is not.

**Mr. Telegdi:** Madam Speaker, we do not govern by divine right. We are mortals. We on this side of the House recognize that anyway.

We understand it takes time to put a bill together that will stand up to the scrutiny of time. That is what we are doing. We

are starting the process toward it. Many members in my caucus and I very much wish that is what we are going to be looking to do.

We can possibly come up with a plan saying that for whatever constitutional consideration and to recognize some of those agreements we are going to cap the size of the House of Commons at, let us say, 300 members. I could live with that as a final cap on numbers. It is very important to get this bill moving so we can get to that.

If the big *R* Reformers want to improve this place, then please listen to a small *r* reformer. Let us get moving in that direction.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. François Langlois (Bellechasse):** Madam Speaker, I will try to keep my contribution to this debate as relevant as possible to the subject before the House: Bill C-18, an Act to suspend the operation of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act.

I had some trouble following the train of thought of the hon. member for Waterloo, since his speech covered a variety of topics, including some criticism of the behaviour of Reform Party members. That is not the intent of my speech today.

First of all, I must say, it is always distressing to see a government using a motion for time allocation, for closure, to put an end to debate.

(1200)

It is always, or nearly always, a distressing moment for parliamentarians to see this desire to gag a democratic debate. We did not support the motion, because it is the very essence of our parliamentary system that debate should take place without undue haste, and with as much for reflection and consideration as possible.

In the case of Bill C-18 before the House today, the debate started on Monday this week, after notice given Friday last week. And after one day of debate, they imposed closure. Why the hurry, when the government could easily have scheduled the tabling of this bill a week or two earlier?

I have somewhat mixed feelings when I speak to Bill C-18, because I strongly object to restricting the debate on a bill in this House, especially after only one day of debate. It is not a matter of life and death, and the government could have taken steps to avoid this.

On the other hand, and this is why I have mixed feelings about the substance of Bill C-18, I share a number of views held by members of the government majority. Bill C-18 asks us to suspend the current process for electoral boundaries review and would refer the issue of representation in this Parliament, including section 51 of the Constitution Act, 1867, to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs; but more about this later.

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Madam Speaker, 1867 was a landmark, an historic date, since on July 1, 1867, the constitutional system in this country changed and became a so-called Confederation, although it was actually an extremely centralized federation, witness the constant debate and struggle, every day and every moment, to ensure that provincial legislatures are able to operate in their fields of jurisdiction. Before 1867, Quebec had half the seats in the Legislature of the Union Parliament; 65 out of 130 for Lower Canada, and of course the remaining 65 for Upper Canada.

It was a dramatic change, and no wonder the Liberal government never consulted the population. Why did the government that was in power just before the Union—and I must make a correction here, because it was not the Liberal government, since it was the Liberal Party which requested a referendum—why did it not conduct a referendum in Quebec, in Lower Canada, on the institutional changes in 1867? Because, according to most historians, the referendum would have been a lost cause.

We started our journey into the institutional desert in 1867, when we lost the equality between two nations: Quebec and English Canada, which itself was seeking its own identity. And as we went on, decade after decade and decennial census after decennial census—since the present Constitution requires a census every ten years—we saw Quebec's political power being eroded.

(1205)

Seventy-five members out of 181, and now, 75 out of 295. If the proposed redrawing of the map now before the people, as submitted by the provincial commissions, is approved, we would hold 75 of the 301 seats. Our representation would continue to be eroded!

Over the years, there has clearly been a collective loss of memory in some circles. Yet, we must constantly remind people that in 1867, Quebec held half of the seats in Canada's parliament. What could be more legitimate than to seek a status that would allow us to manage our own affairs, according to the wishes of the majority of our people. In fact, just prior to Confederation in 1867, the Parliament of the united Canada of 1840 operated according to the double majority rule, which meant that decisions made required the backing of a majority of the members representing Upper Canada and a majority of the members representing Lower Canada. Quebec enjoyed de facto a veto over all decisions affecting it. On this score, we have certainly lost ground.

I can speak openly about Bill C-18 without any ulterior motives since I campaigned right up until October 25 as a candidate who was seeking to become the last federal member of Parliament for Bellechasse. And this has continued to be my position. Therefore, I can allow myself great latitude when it comes to this bill to readjust or redraw electoral boundaries.

During my speech the other day, I mentioned that the Bloc Québécois, which is dedicated to defending Quebec's interests and to promoting Quebec sovereignty, will never support the empty chair policy or the scorched-earth policy, regardless of what the future holds for Quebec, and that the decision ultimately rests with Quebecers and with Quebecers alone. In this regard, we must see to it that our future is protected, regardless of the decisions that will be made.

*[English]*

**Mr. Hermanson:** Madam Speaker, there does not appear to be a quorum in the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** Call in the members.

*And the bells having rung:*

*And the count having been taken:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** The quorum has been attained.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Robichaud:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker. Since there are people watching, when the member of the Reform Party asked if there was a quorum, there was only one member of that party in the House.

*[English]*

**Mr. Hermanson:** Madam Speaker I thought that the House was suspended and the members were to be called in because there were only 16 members in the House, which is not a quorum.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** We have now attained a quorum and I have said so.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. François Langlois (Bellechasse):** Madam Speaker, I thought that it was inappropriate, as Beauchesne says several times in his book on parliamentary procedure, to point out the absence of members in this House. My hon. colleague from Beauséjour, no doubt in a fleeting moment of distraction, forgot this rule of which he himself would have reminded me.

(1210)

When the request for a quorum count was made and you checked according to the rules, I was talking about the leeway we might have in the Official Opposition since we do not really intend to use the new electoral maps. But in any case we have to defend this legislation. We have to defend it for the voters of all of Canada, from the Atlantic to the Pacific to the Arctic. It is our duty as Official Opposition to do so.

The other day, strangely enough, I heard the member for Kamloops say that the Official Opposition only defended regional interests. Madam Speaker, you heard us on the link between Prince Edward Island and the mainland, we supported the constitutional motion. We spoke up on the lockout in the Port of Vancouver. Who spoke up on Ginn Publishing? This is not a strictly local problem concerning the suburb of Ste-Foy or the riding of La Prairie; control of Canadian culture is a federal

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problem. We spoke up, as did our colleagues in the Reform Party. Strangely enough, our friends in the Liberal caucus, who probably had problems and were all coming back from Mr. Muffler, were completely silent on the subject.

I will now return to the subject being debated, before I am called to order. Bill C-18 must be passed, because the rules for setting electoral boundaries were laid down 30 years ago. From time to time, with specific bills, electoral reforms were stopped, changed or given a different direction, but the process as a whole was not thoroughly debated. I see the member for Beauséjour who seems to share my point of view; I believe that we can come to fairly unanimous agreement on this point. I would like to thank the hon. member for the consent he has just given.

So we can review the various provisions in the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs in an unbiased way. Since I myself am on this committee, I think that it would be inappropriate for me to take a position when we have a motion to refer it to the committee on which I sit. I will participate without prejudice as the committee hears witnesses. The motion of reference presented provides that the committee can hear witnesses and travel as required across Canada and also hear witnesses by teleconference.

A very broad procedure has been established. I think that this might answer the concerns of the hon. member for Calgary West who felt that Bill C-18 excluded the people from the debate. On the contrary, it is an inclusive process. In no way do we want to keep the people out of the debate; we do not want to have completely pointless hearings by provincial commissions that would be suspended in a few days because of Bill C-18. The people will have a chance to be heard by the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

I would also like to talk about the position of the hon. member for Beaver River, which I have trouble understanding.

(1215)

I listened carefully to the hon. member's speech, and since she started it on Monday, I was able to read it over in *Hansard*. My understanding is that the hon. member was not trying to defend the Beaver River constituency, that her riding had been created in 1988, and that it would disappear if the proposals presently before the provincial commissions are passed.

Strangely enough, the hon. member is the same one who tabled Bill C-210, an Act to provide for the recall of members of the House of Commons. I think the hon. member for Beaver River should be pleased that her bill has still not been passed, because I presume it would not take long for the registers in her riding of Beaver River to open, asking for the recall of the hon. member, since she does not want to defend her constituents'

interests. I find her attitude strange, to say the least. I guess the hon. member must have her own reasons.

In the two minutes left, I want to discuss the last point, which deals with section 51 of the Constitution Act of 1867. Section 51 states that electoral boundaries readjustments will take place on completion of each decennial census. However, that same section also excludes the Northwest Territories and the Yukon from the process. Consequently, the redistribution takes place once constituencies are specifically allocated to these very vast but sparsely populated areas.

I think that, on top of the Northwest Territories and the Yukon, we should also look at the case of the Magdalen Islands in Quebec, a distinct community remote from the continent, with its own specific problems—and I am pleased to see that the hon. member for Kingston approves—and also Labrador. That region forms a very large territory which should be represented by someone. There have to be ridings with a larger population, so as to enable Labrador to have its own local representative.

At least four exceptions should be made, and that does not include other representations which could be made. I am referring of course to the Yukon and the Northwest Territories, but also to the Magdalen Islands and to Labrador.

It is with a very open mind that I will take part in the work of the committee, since I only made general comments which will certainly not keep me from listening with an open mind, free of any bias or preconceived idea, to the representations which will be made to the Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, of which I am a member.

**Mr. Dan McTeague (Ontario):** Madam Speaker, I would also like to congratulate the hon. member again on his remarks. At the beginning of his speech, he commented on Quebec's numerical disadvantage, with regard to representation in particular.

This kind of argument or historical reasoning is not new. Besides, over the past 25 years, every government elected to the House of Commons has been led by a Prime Minister from Quebec. Does the hon. member not agree with me that Quebec has historically been well represented in this federation?

(1220)

**Mr. Langlois:** I will be pleased to respond, through you, Madam Speaker, to the comment by the hon. member for Ontario.

Of course we have been represented in this House by members from all political affiliations since 1867, often distinguished men and women, with the likes of Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Prime Minister Louis Saint-Laurent. I will not talk about more modern times, and events which have not yet found a definitive place in history, for fear of sounding partisan, but I do believe that Quebec has had distinguished parliamentarians. That is not the point.

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The point I am making is that, however distinguished our representatives, we remain a minority in this place. However great the speeches made in this House by Quebec members from whatever political party, when a vote is held—and the hon. member for Ontario has seen it for himself as well as we all did—the majority rules and the vote from the quietest of member cancels that of the most talkative and convincing one. In that context, I can agree with the hon. member only as far as to say that very distinguished representatives from Quebec have sat in this House.

[*English*]

**Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster):** Madam Speaker, I have a comment and a question for my hon. friend.

As we know the current bill suspends the Electoral Boundaries Redistribution Act simply because government members are not happy with the outcome of the act. That is very frightening. Just because they are not happy with the outcome they take Draconian measures such as introducing time allocation after only four hours of debate on a bill and pushing the agenda through the House without giving adequate time for debate.

I really believe that every member should have an opportunity to speak freely and reasonably in this House. What if the whole focus of this bill was different and we were in effect restricting a party in this House whose views were not agreed with by the other parties in the House. It could very easily happen because as a member of Reform I disagree with the separatist views of the Bloc Quebecois.

Suppose we decided because the rules of the House offer a lot of privileges to the Official Opposition we wanted to restrict those and introduced time allocation to do so and rammed it through the House.

I just wonder how the hon. member would feel about that type of reaction and program.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Langlois:** Madam Speaker, the hon. member's question reminds me of question period in the afternoon or on Friday morning when a government member plants a question for his minister. I thank the hon. member.

We voted against the time allocation motion and against closure because it is unacceptable, particularly in a parliamentary government. The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands is right to insist, especially since it would have been so easy to

make plans in the parliamentary agenda to table the bill ten days or two weeks earlier. I share the hon. member's concerns on this.

[*English*]

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South):** Madam Speaker, as I follow the debate, it would appear that the situation here is not a vote so much to do something as opposed to maybe stopping something which may put us into a situation which would be unacceptable to Canadians.

Members have asked for time to discuss and time allocation would restrict that. Is it not the intent of the overall motion and the process to allow more time for members throughout the entire House to have a fuller discussion about the criteria for boundary setting and to ensure that Canadians are going to be well represented in the House through these major changes?

(1225)

There is time to do this. I wonder if the member would agree that taking the time to do this job properly is the right course of action.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Langlois:** Madam Speaker, I find it quite strange and somewhat unacceptable as a parliamentarian to see the hon. member for Waterloo refer to the relevance of the debate in the question and comment period, when he spent all his time attacking our colleagues from the Reform Party, not on the substance of the motion but on their behaviour in the House, which we refrain from doing. This is my only comment.

[*English*]

**Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops):** Madam Speaker, I would like to say that this is indeed a dark day for democracy. It is a dark day for the parliamentary system.

I remember it took the Conservatives at least a few months before they brought in the heavy hand of closure or time allocation. I know that the previous Prime Minister, Mr. Mulroney, held this place in contempt. For him Parliament was a nuisance, something that he had to put up with as he imposed his agenda on the people of Canada.

In opposition the Liberal Party would often join with the New Democrats and criticize the government for using the heavy hand of closure so flippantly, so easily. I know we do not hear jackboots in the hallways of Parliament yet and I know we do not see brown shirts around this place, but I will tell you, Madam Speaker, the people of Canada should consider this to be an early warning. Once again we have seen a government that is prepared to change the standing orders to give almost exclusive powers to



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the executive, to make this institution of Parliament almost a joke.

If the government executive decides that it is time to finish debate, it is finished. If it decides that it is going to impose some new initiative on the legislative agenda, it can do that instantly.

This is a good example. Two or three weeks ago did people hear that a major pressing issue that would require some vote of closure was required in terms of the boundaries of our federal constituencies? It was not even discussed. I suspect most people in Canada are still shaking their heads wondering what this debate is all about. Here the government says: "This is so important and it is so critical that we are going to use closure".

I can understand the previous government doing something on the GST or the free trade agreement where there were vicious and deep divisions. Surely to goodness this is not the kind of thing that we ought to rush through this House.

I want to ask my friend who just spoke whether or not he saw the *Globe and Mail* this morning and noticed that the parts of Canada that would be most adversely impacted by not proceeding would be the far western part, Alberta and British Columbia, where their representation is so skewed because of population increases? Did he recognize that and does he realize that this initiative is really going to short change western Canadians?

[Translation]

**Mr. Langlois:** Madam Speaker, the comments made by the hon. member for Kamloops are quite relevant and, as I said earlier, I felt a little uncomfortable taking part in the debate since I am against the closure motion but for the substance of Bill C-18. I understood that he was in a rather similar situation because, in some regions of British Columbia, the people who drew up the electoral map visualized the Rockies as a vast plain, according to the speech he made in the House on Monday.

As for what he said about the increase in population, particularly in Western Canada and his province, British Columbia, we are, of course, aware of the data and hope to do the necessary work in time. That is part of the reason why the referral motion includes a deadline, so that the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs can hold hearings and table its report as soon as possible.

As you are indicating to me that I have very little time left, there is one thing I hope for, Madam Speaker: that we will be able to listen to people before electoral maps are tabled everywhere and that only minor changes are made.

(1230)

[English]

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** We are resuming debate with 10-minute speeches and no questions or comments.

**Mr. John O'Reilly (Victoria—Haliburton):** Madam Speaker, I am sorry I will not be able to get into the friendly banter back and forth. I did not want to speak on the political diversity of our parties but on the redistribution in Bill C-18 and how it affects my riding of Victoria—Haliburton, because that is really what we are here for.

I disagree there is no outcry against redistribution. My riding is one that is second in geographic size in southern Ontario. It is being torn apart by redistribution. My riding takes in Victoria county and Haliburton county. It also takes in the township of Brock, which is really in the region of Durham. It takes in the south end of Peterborough county and the north end of Peterborough county from beautiful Buckhorn all the way to Bancroft.

Geographically it is the same size as Prince Edward Island. It is a large area to cover and has a lot of people. My riding will be reduced in size which I should be applauding, but in the fashion that I feel is important to the House I went and consulted with the area that is being taken away and the area that is being added. Neither one of them wants to move.

Brock township is an area that would be well served by being added to Victoria—Haliburton. It would be taken and added to the top end of Newcastle or Clarington which has absolutely no geographic similarity other than they are both in Ontario. It would be taken away from the central region of Victoria—Haliburton, a populous area. Keeping in mind that I have a population of 101,000 according to the 1991 census, it would be reduced to somewhere around 94,000.

There are many reasons to support the redistribution or not support it. My reasons are strictly based on my own riding and the effect redistribution will have on it. I am heartened when I hear the member for Beaver River speaking because I also have a Beaver River in my riding. It runs through Brock township and Beaverton and into Lake Simcoe. On Monday of this week I went to Beaverton to meet with the Brock township council. We discussed among other things the redistribution aspect but also the rejuvenation of Beaverton harbour. Hopefully that harbour will be part of the government's beautification program and, in looking at the economic problems that exist, Brock township will be enhanced by having a good harbour in Beaverton.

When we talk about the press not coming to the fore on this matter, as I read the Lindsay *Daily Post* in my riding it starts out with an editorial that says: "John O'Reilly is right". For the press to say that in itself is something that strikes right at my heart, but I am opposed for two reasons: first, my riding is affected in a way that is not beneficial to it and, second, there is a great cost involved in redistribution.

The cost of adding six members of Parliament is something I think the Reform Party, and myself included, should look at very hard. Why would we want to add that kind of money? Why would we even think in these tough economic times of adding millions of dollars to taxpayers' expenses? I can understand

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Reformers saying that they would like to know what the rules are before the game starts.

(1235)

We have to look at the issue and say that we cannot strike a committee in the government and tell it what its conclusions are to be. If the committee is to investigate redistribution and the reasons for redistribution it has to go in with a clear mandate. It cannot be something that is driven by politics. It has to be something that is driven by economics and the times we live in. It is not just the drawing of lines on maps that eliminate Brock township and add Ennismore. I will speak on Ennismore also. Ennismore being added to my riding makes less sense than taking Brock away.

My riding now runs across the eastern end to above the village of Norwood, which makes absolutely no sense. Once again it is a large geographic riding and very difficult to cover. Ennismore is above the city of Peterborough. Redistribution takes the city of Peterborough, makes a doughnut out of it and gives the rest of the area around it to the surrounding ridings. Adding Ennismore, which is steeped in Irish Catholic history, should obviously be an advantage to me.

I am not speaking strictly on partisan terms. The fact of the matter is that Ennismore is being added to the centre of Victoria—Haliburton where my constituency office and the town of Lindsay are located. Ennismore is above the city of Peterborough. Most people in Ennismore gravitate to the city of Peterborough to work. All government services are in the city of Peterborough. As these areas are added to ridings like Victoria—Haliburton and as Brock township is taken away and added to something else, the whole boondoggle, as I call it, makes absolutely no sense. I oppose it. Also I am not comfortable with closure. I must say that I do not find closure to be a comfortable way to do government. I say that quite heartily.

I have looked at the problem. Maybe it is minuscule; maybe it is not. The commission is out right now. Besides the \$5 million it has already spent or wasted, as I would put it, it is going to waste more money in booking rooms, hiring staff, holding meetings, putting me and my constituents into a position where I am preparing on one side to oppose redistribution of my riding and on the other side supporting closure so that I do not have to go to the meetings and waste more taxpayers' money.

I talked to some Reform members and when I was through the comment one of them made was that I was more Reform than they were. I must agree with that because money and the spending of taxpayers' money are close to my heart. I came out of municipal politics where I instituted a system in my municipality that stopped debenturing and started reserves. Now I see that the municipalities in my area that have followed the

procedure are able to take advantage of the infrastructure program because of planning they started in the past.

We all realize there are no more taxpayers' dollars to try to get. We have to save at every opportunity. Besides the process that is ongoing, a way of saving taxpayers' dollars would be by stopping the process. April 14 will be the first date under the process we could actually see the bill go through, cut off the hearings and bring redistribution to a halt. Then it should be restudied and looked at along the lines of Canada as a whole.

When I talk about my geographic area being the same size as Prince Edward Island, I do not mean to talk about four members from Prince Edward Island handling the same area that I handle as one member. Obviously I am already saving money under the program. The fact of the matter is that redistribution for my riding does not make sense. It will not benefit the voters of Victoria—Haliburton whom I represent. I hope other members represent their voters in the same way. I worry about that interim period where a huge amount of voting power is taken away from one riding and put into another. Does the member then spend less time there and more in the one that is being added? Those are questions I have not been able to answer.

(1240)

I know my 10 minutes is coming to an end, but I hope members realize that stopping the hearings saves money. Five million dollars has been wasted; let us not waste any more. Let us look at the ridings that are adversely affected like mine and the damage it does to the system I have to work in. Let us stop in any way we can and take a hard look at redistribution and its effects on my riding and on other ridings in Canada.

**Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster):** Mr. Speaker, I will try to condense a 20-minute speech into 10 minutes to conform with the time allocation motion which restricts the time I have to address the House.

It is a sad day to be speaking, about two months into a new Parliament.

**Mr. Robichaud:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The member who has just risen referred to the time allocation motion limiting his speech to 10 minutes. It has nothing to do with that. According to the rules, after a certain amount of debate speeches are reduced to 10 minutes. It has nothing to do with time allocation.

**Mr. Hermanson:** Mr. Speaker, I heard debate on Jimmy Swaggart, codes of conduct and a number of irrelevant issues. I did not sense that they related at all to the motion today. I would appreciate if the Chair would be fair in its application of those sorts of matters.

This act would suspend the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act. Why should we suspend an act that is currently in place and the process it enables is halfway through being completed? Certainly there are some things that would justify suspending the act. If we could find some illegal activities by Elections Canada or if illegal activities were being undertaken

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by the commissions themselves, certainly that would draw attention to the House. Perhaps we would have to put forward legislation to suspend the act so that we could review what had taken place to find out if there had been any misproprieties involved in the carrying out of the mandate of the act.

I have heard no such allegations from the government or from anywhere else, for that matter. I have heard a number of members of Parliament who are deeply upset with the results of where the boundaries are drawn. They are not prepared to let the public have input but want to suspend the process before it reaches that point.

Another reason we might want to suppress or suspend the mandate of the act is if it were seeming to violate the Constitution. Supposing they had drawn boundaries in such a way that they violated the Constitution or had changed the numbers of ridings in provinces in such a way that it was against the enactment of our Constitution. Certainly we would have to take action. However that has not happened.

If under the act there had been refusal to allow public input into the process we would have a basis upon which to debate the bill today, but that has not happened. It will happen if the bill is enacted and the suspension takes place because we are at the point where the public hearings are about to take place.

It really concerns me when I hear members of Parliament, particularly from the other side, talking about their ridings, being totally upset with where the boundaries are drawn and saying: "I have to stop this. My riding is not unfolding the way it should". This is before they have had a chance to hear what the public in their ridings are saying and what is the general consensus of the process in each province. Certainly that is not a reasonable approach or reason for suspending the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act.

(1245)

If this process had gone way over budget perhaps we should review it, but as I understand there was about \$8 million allocated in this budget to the commissions to do their job. I understand that they are reasonably on track. They have spent about \$5 million to this point and will spend the remaining \$3 million through the public hearing process, a very important process that would be eliminated by the approval of Bill C-18. What a shame to have wasted \$5 million.

I just heard the hon. member on the other side suggest that we needed to pass this act to save money. I cannot understand how investing \$5 million and seeing that all go for nought because the work of the commission ceased to exist and is thrown out

into the garbage heap is in fact good stewardship of taxpayers' dollars. It sounds to me like it would be just the opposite.

As nearly as we can determine, at least there has been no evidence brought forward by the government that there has been a misappropriation of funds or that the commissions have gone severely over their budget. This certainly does not seem to be a reason why we should suspend the act that we are suspending today.

Maybe if they had refused to hold the public hearings we should be introducing the bill that we are introducing today but these public hearings are already scheduled. In the province of Saskatchewan the first one is slated for May 2. Certainly as a member of Parliament I was prepared like any other Canadian citizen to go to that hearing and present my case for changes that I think should be made in my riding of Kindersley—Lloydminster. Like my hon. colleague for Beaver River we are seeing our ridings disappear.

Mine gets divided into three ways. Certainly I would like to make some comments about that but I would respect the wisdom of the public to also have input into what they think the redrawn map of Saskatchewan should look like, especially as it affects my riding of Kindersley—Lloydminster.

Second, perhaps we could look at suspending this act if we had a plan in place to cap seats, a plan to deal with some of the constitutional implications that would take place if we did cap seats. If we had a plan to undertake to provide the provinces with the proper representation in the Parliament of Canada, should in fact capping of the seats mean a reduction of seats for certain provinces?

This plan is not in place. There is nothing in the Liberal red book. There has been no discussion in this session of the House as to what that plan might be. All I have seen is a very broadly based motion that talks about reviewing a number of issues with no definite plan in place.

I would say without this plan the number of seats in this House could be expanded beyond the six that we would see if the current process were allowed to continue. It has happened in the past. This is not a wild accusation by any stretch of the imagination.

The problem is without redistribution the growing provinces are penalized. We cannot continue to expand seats in the House of Commons and so the smaller provinces will be penalized if we do not look at a new process and new way of bringing representation to the Parliament of Canada.

Of course the obvious way to remedy this situation is to reform the Senate. I have not heard one word of Senate reform from members opposite that would give the provinces the

regional representation they would need if they were to lose seats in the House if we did cap the seats and keep this House from being expanded. The government has absolutely no plan.

If we cannot justify this bill what would we do? Why are we debating this bill? The reasons are few but they are not very good. MPs are not happy with the boundaries. To me that is not a good enough reason to suspend an act. MPs are not happy with the personalities. I have heard reference to some of the commissions and the commissioners saying that one commissioner in New Brunswick had complained about the process and the people he was involved with and working with. That is not a good enough reason to suspend the whole process.

I have heard some complaints even about Elections Canada which have acted properly within the mandate provided it. Again this justification for suspending the act is not a reasonable one at all.

I have heard of MPs saying they do not want to permit the public hearings. They think that is a waste of money. I would think it reflects very badly upon a government if it is not prepared to allow the public to have input into this process before it decides to change the whole process. This has already been delayed once and now we are talking about a second delay. The current boundaries are based on the 1981 census. We may be into the next century, in fact the next millennium before we redraw the boundaries.

(1250)

There is also a danger that if we suspend this act it may give the opportunity for MPs to be involved or to try to influence the formation of the new commissions with patronage like the old days, patronage in the commissions, perhaps even patronage appointments at Elections Canada.

I would like to read a letter that was addressed to the Prime Minister regarding Bill C-18 from the Brampton Board of Trade. It says:

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

The Brampton Board of Trade felt that your government had turned the pages on the old style of governing and opened the process to inclusive government by asking for input from the Canadian people.

Therefore, we are quite concerned that the Hon. Herb Gray would introduce a bill in the House to suspend the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment process for 24 months. At this point in time the commission struck last September is now at the stage of public hearings. Further, the commission has already spent \$5 million of the budgeted \$8 million for this study and continues to prepare for the public hearings in April and May.

The board feels it is not appropriate nor necessary for a review committee to step in at this time and shut down the public process.

If Bill C-18 is passed we ask what are the additional costs to the taxpayers? We already know what the current commission has cost.

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**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Szabo)** I regret that the member's time has expired.

**Mr. Scott (Skeena):** Madam Speaker, on a point of order. It appears by my count that we do not have a quorum present.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** Call in the members.

*And the count having been taken:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** I now see a quorum.

**Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra):** Madam Speaker, this debate has been prefaced by individual hon. members referring to their own situations. I should perhaps indicate that I won my own riding with what was the largest majority for a Liberal candidate in British Columbia and, second, we have examined the basis of the proposed electoral changes and our inquiries confirm that while my constituency seat is divided in two I would have a comfortable majority in one part and a very large majority in the other.

This having been said, I would say that having knocked on 10,000 doors in the process of seeking a nomination and then winning an election, I have formed a tie of intimacy with my fellow Canadians in the riding and I would be very sorry to lose it.

However, let me get on to the substance of this debate. I speak with experience as a former electoral commissioner for British Columbia. The then Speaker of the House, Madam Sauvé, telephoned me and said that Parliament was very anxious to put the commissions on a non-partisan basis and would I serve for what was by the way a very nominal remuneration and I served.

I do have some comments from my experience there. The first very obvious thing for these electoral commissions is an absence of continuity and therefore of shared experience which is the basis of any law-making in the commissions. It is the habit to replace each commission with a change of government. I would say that when there was a change of government my own commission was summarily replaced and the successor commission made no attempt to contact us or to find out if we had any shared experience we would want to pass on.

The second thing that struck me was an absence of co-ordination between one commission and another. That is to say, in British Columbia we were unaware of what the commission in Alberta was doing or what its philosophy was if it had a philosophy. I think this goes back to one of the interesting aspects of the present system.

(1255)

Everybody fulfils their mandate honestly and with all due skills that they bring to the task, but there is an absence of overall direction partly because the federal electoral commissioner, as a civil servant, under the act in which he is established construes his role narrowly so as not to get into policy issues

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and I think he is correct in that, but partly also, in comparison with other countries because our Constitution supplies almost nothing in the way of motor principles to guide the electoral commission.

If we look at the United States constitution there are detailed and specific provisions as to elections, as to the electoral processes, supplemented by those great amendments 13, 14 and 15, the post-civil war ones which give very clear directives that were not in the first years fully observed and a succession of amendments right up to the present day.

The third factor of course is that the United States supreme court in relationship to congress, to the legislature, and to the state legislatures which under the American constitution actually make the allocations, has developed some 100 or so cases establishing the limiting parameters of electoral distribution.

We have virtually no jurisprudence at all from our Supreme Court for two reasons. The court has viewed these as political questions beyond its technical competence and, second, we have not had that litigation orientation that is present in the United States and which explains the fact that the Americans much more than Canada have taken note of changes in electoral sociology.

Electoral laws no more than other laws are not graven on stone tablets fixed once and for all for all time. They have to change as a society evolves. If we look at the Canada of 1964, not simply in its population distribution but in terms of effective participation in the political processes by interest groups, ethnic groups and other communities it is a quite different Canada. Yet the electoral law unlike the law of the United States does not reflect this. I think this is a pity. There has been a certain vacuum or lagging in our development not merely in comparison to the United States but in relation to countries like Germany, Japan and India which to a considerable extent have tried to follow American jurisprudence.

I made a study for the Canadian Institute for the Administration of Justice which as members know is a professional group bringing together the chief justices and judges of Canada. I made an address in 1989 which is available in which I compared American, German, Japanese, Indian and other modern democratic countries and Canada. The conclusion was we badly needed updating constitutional electoral principles. We needed to restructure. I think it should have come 10 years ago. In a sense we are approaching it today.

My own feeling as an electoral commissioner was that we were guided by the past. I think one very obvious principle is that a commissioner is not a philosopher king. He or she is not

God. One has to respect the expectations of the people to whom the member is addressing his report.

We have 205 new members in this House. I would have thought that it goes beyond the prudent bounds of an electoral commission as it is presently constituted under the present law to change the ridings in a dramatic revolutionary fashion.

We assumed in 1980 to 1984 when I served that change should be incremental and that revolutionary changes should be suggested for the future for an incremental process. I worry when my Newfoundland colleagues tell me that although Newfoundland has hardly changed demographically since the last election all the seats have been redistributed. Why? What is the rationale for it?

If we look across the electoral commissions we will find that some of them have a clear philosophy.

(1300)

It is very evident in the way the distributions occurred. Some are moved by concepts of affirmative action that one finds in United States Supreme Court jurisprudence. Others are more traditional. These are both legitimate considerations but it is a matter on which civil servants, as such, and casually appointed commissioners with the best of intentions and the best of qualifications, should not be making decisions. These are issues of constituent power that is superior even to the Constitution itself. It is time that Parliament expressed itself and established the principles.

In my seat of Vancouver Quadra, by accident or by deliberate design over 30 years we have a constituency that represents 22 different ethnic communities. It is one of the rich experiences of my life to make the acquaintance of all such groups and to build an electoral consensus, which means building an intellectual and philosophical consensus among the groups.

Under the proposed redistribution, that multiplicity of representation of communities disappears. The philosophy seems to be to produce integral constituencies. That again is an approach that can be justified philosophically, but I do not think it should be made by commissioners in the interstices of what purports to be a simple administrative inquiry and distribution according to statistics.

It needs debate in Parliament. I would like to see the structured system that I have spoken of in terms of the United States where constitutional law is not made by any one actor alone, but as Jeremy Bentham said, it is made by the constitutional company.

The greatness of the American system is that Congress, the legislature, the administrators and the courts work together and that is the objective we should be aiming at.

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[*Translation*]

**Mr. Richard Bélisle (La Prairie):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the debate today on Bill C-18.

As several members have mentioned, this bill is an act to suspend the operation of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act in Canada.

The Act, which will cease to be in effect if Bill C-18 is passed, provides for the creation of 75 new constituencies in Quebec. This act also provides for the setting up of a federal electoral boundaries commission in each of the ten provinces, as well as in the Northwest Territories.

The proposal resulting from this legislation was to have been the object of public consultations in the weeks to come. This proposal, which seemed to me to be serious and well articulated, was based on the following principles, as is normally the case with this type of exercise or review: The geographical size, the density of population, the size of urban and rural centres, as well as other factors such as the common interest, the cultural identity and the historic evolution of the various regions and communities involved.

Except for unusual circumstances, the population of a constituency should more or less represent 25 per cent of the province's electoral quota. As you all know, this quota is calculated by dividing the province's population by the number of ridings allocated to that same province.

This whole review was based on data compiled in 1991, during the last federal decennial census—an exercise which takes place every ten years—conducted by Statistics Canada, a highly professional organization.

What is the impact of this review under the current legislation? Four ridings would be added in Ontario and two in British Columbia, while the number of Mps representing the other provinces would remain the same.

Quebec would still have 75 ridings, but most of these would undergo significant changes. The Montérégie, which is the region on the South Shore of Montreal, would gain one riding. Indeed, electoral boundaries are based on population changes, and Montreal's South Shore is currently experiencing the highest population growth in Quebec, particularly in its central and midwest sectors.

The riding most affected by this review in the Montérégie is Laprairie, which I have the honour of representing here in this House.

(1305)

A new riding, called Saint-Lambert, is created around the town of Saint-Lambert, where I live. To Saint-Lambert are added Greenfield Park, LeMoynes and the western part of Lon-

gueuil, which together form the new riding of Saint-Lambert. The western part of the existing riding becomes the new riding of Brossard—La Prairie. The result is that the riding I now represent will be divided into two entirely new ridings.

The riding of Brossard—La Prairie will consist of the towns of the same name, plus Candiac and that part of the regional county municipality of Roussillon which is included in the parish of Saint-Philippe.

As I said earlier, the Montérégie will now have eleven instead of ten ridings. This seems sensible and consistent with the guidelines I described earlier.

The Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for Quebec has, in my opinion, done a good job, and is to submit the results for public hearings very shortly. This proposal is well founded in terms of geography, population density, the size of outlying areas and other factors I mentioned earlier.

Why, after two years of work and spending \$5 million, does the Liberal government want to stop the work being done by this commission? Is it because of lobbying by a number of backbenchers whose ridings will otherwise be drastically changed or will disappear altogether? Is it because it wants to postpone all this work for two years, which means that, considering the need for new public hearings and a repeat of the legislative process, the next election in Canada would, as far as electoral boundaries are concerned, follow the status quo?

The best way to avoid upsetting a large caucus is to change nothing, and the government is a past master at this sort of thing.

I think one principle is particularly important: we should not increase the number of electoral districts in Canada. Two hundred and ninety-five electoral districts for 27 million people is already too much, compared with what we see in the United States and many other western countries. Each new member of Parliament costs more than \$1 million per session. Reducing the deficit also extends to considerations of this nature.

Bill C-18 would suspend for 24 months the operation of the present Act. The eleven electoral boundaries commissions would be dissolved and new commissions would be created within 60 days after the Act ceases to be suspended.

In our opinion, the 11 commissions have done a consistent and creditable job, but the electoral quota, in Quebec as well as elsewhere in Canada, will have to be increased in order to reduce the number of members of the House.

We are told that the process has not been studied in depth for 30 years, but should we redo everything, abolish the present commissions, name new ones and start all over again?

Why freeze the process for two more years? Is it to fight the next election with the present boundaries?

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By passing Bill C-18 we would condone the waste of five million dollars, the shelving of another government study and the sweeping under the carpet of conclusions that do not seem to please the government.

Why should we start from scratch all the time? Even if we proceed with new studies, I can assure the House that the future ridings will be very similar to the ones proposed under the present Act. Why? Because the base will be the same, it will be the census of 1991. Regions and cities will be the same. The framework for analysis and apportionment will remain the population of each county, and the number of voters per riding in each province will not change. Geographical areas, population densities, community of interest and cultural identity do not change overnight, and this means, according to me, that the conclusions will be similar.

Being based on the same given quantities and qualities, the conclusions of the second exercise cannot differ markedly from those arrived at under the present Act. One thing only would produce noticeably different results, that is if the density of population in one specific riding could diverge by more than 25 per cent from the provincial ratio; that could be advantageous for rural communities. If that percentage were closer to 10 or 15 per cent, it would benefit urban areas and would increase considerably the surface of rural areas.

(1310)

However, identical premises will only give us more or less identical results. Is it worth it to start this exercise all over again if we are to get similar results in the end? What is the government's intention? Do they want to save time or please the caucus members who want to be reelected whatever the cost to taxpayers?

In conclusion, what is important for Bloc Quebecois members is that all Quebec constituents are well represented in this House, whatever the distribution of the federal electoral boundaries for the province. As for the next federal election, the Bloc now hopes above all that the Parti Quebecois will be elected in Quebec in 1994 and that the referendum which will follow in 1995 will lead to sovereignty. Since the redistribution of the federal electoral map will be implemented only at a later date in Canadian provinces, it could very well never apply in Quebec.

Finally, I would like to add that I also agree with my colleague, the member for Bellechasse who said in this House earlier this morning that Quebec lost its sovereignty in 1867. In fact, the link that existed between Upper Canada and Lower Canada before 1867 was really a sovereignty-association type of relationship very similar to the one the Bloc Quebecois is advocating today.

**Mr. Dan McTeague (Ontario):** Madam Speaker, once again, I welcome this opportunity to say a few more words regarding the redistribution of seats in Canada.

*[English]*

I need no lesson in what redistribution will mean for this member of Parliament. The Ontario riding is one of the largest, most populace ridings in the country. It has approximately 205,000 people. If projected census information is correct, by the turn of this century, the time at which I will reach the ripe age of 37 years, my riding will be in excess of 300,000 people.

However, I want to point out that my reasons for supporting the government in this initiative are many. Why do we need new seats? It seems to me that we have just gone through a long election process in which we described to people unequivocally the need to look after our financial House. We took the message from Canadians that we must work with that which they have provided us.

The cost associated with adding new seats to the House of Commons is estimated to be in excess of one million dollars per year. At a time when all of us are looking for opportunities to make sure that we keep our fiscal house in order, it seems to me that proceeding with the addition of new seats without regard to better distribution of the resources that we already have flies in the face of the hard earned tax money that Canadians tell us is so hard to come by.

I want to point out that in my riding of Ontario, and I do not want to speak from a parochial point of view of what it does to me, but given the significance and the load which I take in my riding of some 205,000 constituents it seems to me that is a threshold that I think is manageable. We should be looking at a process here—and this is certainly something that the committee can assign to itself—to look at a better distribution of the seats that we already have. I note some of my colleagues here from the other parties from around Ontario. We have a tremendous opportunity at this point to perhaps look at where ridings are relative to mine.

In the riding of Oshawa next door there are 95,000 constituents. In the riding to the north of me there are 130,000 constituents. In my riding there are 205,000 constituents. Rather than adding a new seat why do we not simply redistribute some of the regions within those three ridings so that we have a platform of some 120,000 or 130,000 on average? We can do the job. We have the resources to do the job. We really do not need any new seats.

I want to point out some of the flaws I saw in the electoral districts supplement to the Canada *Gazette* proposals for the province of Ontario.

(1315)

On reading the section dealing with Durham region it seems patently unclear for a committee that has spent a lot of time on this what they really mean in terms of distribution. It indicates that for the regional municipality of Durham the population is expected to be some 401,000. They are proposing that the district of Durham remains the same except for the inclusion of

the township of Brock and the removal of parts formerly within the enlarged Oshawa district and the entire town of Whitby. The new riding of Ontario would include the town of Whitby.

There is a contradiction. It seems to me rather than go through the exercise of pointing out all the flaws that are evident when not enough time is put into such a proposition, maybe we should rethink how we want to assign the distribution of seats in the House of Commons in years to come.

We want to talk about the need for flexibility, not rigidity. This process of automatically increasing seats over the next few years seems unreasonable. We are not taking into account current realities, the fiscal realities, as I indicated earlier. We are not even looking at the need for balance in terms of the federation which is represented in this House.

I heard some hon. colleagues discuss the importance of having their regions better represented. My colleague for Bellechasse made comments to the effect that Quebec as a region in Canada has a numerical inferiority problem with the distribution of seats. Guess what? So does Ontario with virtually 10 million people represented by 99 seats. If any region has been left out in terms of the distribution of seats perhaps we should be looking at Ontario's case.

There are 205,000 residents in my riding. Prince Edward Island for example may only have as many as 30,000 yet we are given exactly the same amount of resources to do the job for the people.

I am not complaining about that but I am making the point that if we want to talk about fairness we truly should talk about fairness in terms of numbers. I do not think the current redistribution act really takes that into account.

I want to talk specifically about the physical nature in which my riding would be divided into two regions. As I indicated the three principal cities of Ajax, Pickering and Whitby in my riding are a whole community.

Under this proposition Ajax, a town of some 65,000 people, would be cut in half. In fact the boundaries go up a secondary street. There is no rhyme nor reason other than the fact they have looked to satisfy a numerical average that simply puts into disregard the needs and long term historic interests of the community. The community of Ajax grew out of the second world war. Over the years it has produced a number of members of Parliament. It would be a real tragedy if under this proposal by the electoral commission the town of Ajax was cut in half.

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This is one of the major reasons I commend the government for its position in moving ahead with the suspension of the redistribution as set out in this guideline.

Although there may be some controversy over the question of how quickly we move to a vote on this issue, we really do not have a lot of time to deal with it. If we were not to correct this today, we might find ourselves in the situation on April 10 where we are raising problems with this document which for all intents and purposes will be redundant anyway. Proceeding in this manner makes a heck of a lot more sense than proceeding full steam ahead with something that is very uncertain.

There was a comment a little earlier about replacing hacks with hacks. I believe it was from the member for Beaver River and I understand her frustration. I find it actually very curious there would be a defence for the proposal as it is since her riding would suddenly disappear.

I do not think that is the intent of this government. In fact, if that were the intent of this government I would be one of those who would be most severely affected. It is my belief the government is going to proceed in a judicious way taking into account common sense principles, taking into account the community and taking into account the compassionate nature under which we have representation in this House of Commons.

(1320)

My riding is one of the weightiest in this country. If I can sacrifice a few good years to make sure we have an electoral boundaries readjustment system that make sense, then I think all members of this House can do the same. Therefore I am placing myself as an example not to the country but to the taxpayer who has been hard hit. We do not need more seats; we need a better distribution of the seats and the infrastructure and the resources that go along with that.

I look forward to participating on the committee with members from the other side of the House in making good policy.

*[Translation]*

Madam Speaker, thank you very much. I am in favour of the passage of this bill.

*[English]*

**Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena):** Madam Speaker, I have been listening with interest to the comments and arguments raised by members opposite.

Today I rise to speak against Bill C-18. As has been pointed out by my colleagues on this side for the last two days of debate on this, the passage of this bill will terminate the work of the electoral commissions. It will effectively prevent redistribution from occurring in time for the next election. Also a budget of



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\$7.8 million was allocated to the commission. Approximately \$5 million of that has already been spent, the benefit of which will be lost if this process is terminated at this time.

Members talk about the effects on their ridings. I must agree with my colleague from Calgary West that these are not our ridings. We tend to take ownership of these ridings as politicians. If anything the ridings own us, we do not own them. In that sense we have a duty to represent the interests and the wishes of those people in the riding we represent.

A number of questions arise for me on that note. Many of my constituents would wonder why we are effectively throwing \$5 million of taxpayers' hard earned money down the drain to suspend this process. There should be some good reasons for doing so.

I hear arguments about trying to cap the number of MPs in the House of Commons. That is a valid point and I agree with it. However there is nothing in this proposed legislation that would cap the number of seats. Getting away from some vague wording about reviewing the increasing number of seats, let us talk about capping the number of seats. If members opposite had included that in the proposed bill then I think they would have found support from the Reform Party, but they have not. They have only proposed to talk about it. I have a great deal of difficulty with that.

My background is in small business. When we say we are going to do something, we do it. We do not talk about doing it. We do not say we are going to review and study it. We say we are going to do it. For the life of me, I cannot understand why the government could not have included that in the bill.

The boundaries of my riding—I am talking as if I owned it but I do not—the boundaries of the riding I represent, Skeena, will be affected greatly if this current proposal by the electoral commission goes through. Right now my riding is probably one of the largest geographically in Canada and my boundaries are going to increase 20 per cent by my calculations.

It is very difficult for members of Parliament to effectively represent geographically large ridings. A lot of travel is involved. Many small communities are far apart. Many communities in my riding are only accessible by air or water, some of them only by air. I know full well the kinds of problems members have to face in dealing with these ridings. Therefore when the boundaries of my riding expand it sends a lot of warning signals to me and I have some difficulties with it.

I remind members that there is a process. My constituents and I can make representations to the commission when it holds public meetings in Prince Rupert. We can submit our objections or suggestions for changes to the proposals the commission has made. This is a matter of process and something I fully subscribe to.

(1325)

I understand why many members may not like the proposals in front of them. I do not like the proposals that are in front of me. The ridings of several of my colleagues in the Reform Party will disappear altogether. Members in other parties are facing the same problem.

However there is a process and I have not heard anyone question the process in these debates. I have not heard anyone say that what we have here is the work of a partisan commission which is out to do political damage to one party or another. That is not the case.

What these commissions are doing by all accounts is non-partisan and unbiased. They are attempting to achieve the objectives they have been given under section 51 of the Constitution Act and the Boundaries Readjustment Act. If in fact that is what the commissions have been working toward, then I question why we want to suspend or get involved in the process. Why would we want to have political interference?

We are talking about political interference. A process has been established and it is functioning. Members of Parliament do not like it. Members of Parliament are going to suspend the process so they can change it to something they like. That is political interference. There is no other description for it. What matters in this debate as far as I am concerned is what Canadians want, not what politicians want.

As I said earlier, any of my constituents who do not like the proposals can make representations before the commission on May 31, 1994 in Prince Rupert. The real evidence of voter concern in my riding will become evident through this public forum.

The bill before us if adopted is political interference at best. It opens the door for partisan manoeuvring. Indeed one would have to ask if this is not the real intent of the bill. Why would the government introduce it if it did not intend to gerrymander or play with the boundaries to the way it wants them rather than the way the commissions have proposed them.

Every citizen of this country no matter what their occupation must play by the rules. That is the law of Canada. If you break the rules, you forfeit either your freedom or some of your hard earned money, or both. If you disagree with the validity of the rules or the laws of the land, if you do not like the processes that are in place, you are at liberty to work through lawful means to try to change them. That is a fundamental principle of democracy.

We as members of Parliament are legislators. We make laws, we change laws, we amend laws. Sometimes we even strike laws from the books when we think they no longer represent what Canadians want. However we are not above the law.

*Government Orders*

In our positions as members of this great House, the very cradle of our democracy, we are in positions of great power. We are the legislators. We have the ability to change laws. Nothing makes Canadians more cynical than to see people being put in these positions of power and then abusing that power when ordinary Canadians do not have the opportunity of using that power to their own ends. That is precisely what is happening with this bill.

In recent years Canadians have become increasingly displeased with Parliament. They have expectations as to how public servants should conduct themselves. They become very cynical when they see politicians attempting to manipulate the system for their own personal gain.

(1330)

There is only one way for Canadians to interpret the passage of this bill. They must conclude that once again the politicians in Ottawa are circumventing due process, a process that most agree is fair and unbiased, for their own gain.

When we all came to this House in January we were talking about conducting ourselves differently in the 35th Parliament. We talked about moving away from the practices previous governments and members engaged in.

Canadians want to believe this. It is therefore vitally important that we back up what we are talking about now through our deeds rather than through our words. Many members are unhappy with the changes that the commission has proposed. Some fear these will impact on their future electoral prospects. Looking at it objectively, the displacement is felt by all parties and virtually all members. No one party or individual was singled out.

As I said earlier, many members on this side of the House will be severely impacted if the current boundary proposals are adopted. Yet we maintain that the process must be allowed to continue and that those who are unhappy with the commission's proposals can make representations within the parameters that the process establishes, rather than voting in favour of this motion out of concern for their own personal political considerations.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** The member has exceeded his time.

**Ms. Mary Clancy (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration):** Madam Speaker, may I say that I am really very pleased to take part in this debate. I am particularly pleased to take part following my friend from the Reform Party—I am sorry but I do not know his riding—because there are a few home truths that need to be brought up here.

Let us talk about some of the things that our constituents want us to do. First of all it is true that there are in some places, in some ridings in the country, people who are greatly dissatisfied

with their representation. It is also true that there are some 70-plus of us in this House—this is not to denigrate in any way any of the new members from any party—who did get re-elected and got elected quite handily with quite large majorities.

In my riding, so that members will know where I am coming from on this, I won every poll but one. Some polls had not been won by a Liberal since Confederation.

In the riding next to me, and these are the two ridings that would be affected should redistribution take place, the same thing happened. The hon. member for Halifax West and I were both very gratified that we won by very large majorities at every poll. I believe the hon. member for Halifax West took every single poll in his riding and, as I said, I lost one. It was certainly remiss of me and I will try not to do it again.

The point I am making is that the reason for this bill, it must be stated here and now, has nothing to do with the worry about boundaries changing and causing problems in the traditional gerrymander, if you will, that ridings are being changed and we might lose them.

With the greatest of respect, I know the member of the Reform Party who is the sole member of his party from Ontario could say that Liberals in the province of Ontario are not particularly worried about the electoral losses of moving boundaries. What we are worried about—I am astounded that we do not have the support of the Reform Party on this—is the cost of increasing the number of members of Parliament to the public purse.

There are 295 of us in a country of 27 or 28 million people. Look at the representation in the House of Representatives in the United States yet they appear to manage their representation very well. In these days when restraint is being urged on us by all fronts, not the least of these urgings coming from the Reform Party members across the way, should we really be considering increasing the number of members of Parliament? I am almost at a loss for words, which I can assure my hon. friend in the Reform Party is not something that happens very often.

(1335)

**Mr. White (Fraser Valley West):** We noticed that.

**Ms. Clancy:** I am sure you did. You may learn from it too.

Consider the fact that members of the Reform Party think we need more members of Parliament. It is unquestionably true that there are certain members for whom a lack of redistribution is creating a difficulty. I refer to my very good friend, the parliamentary secretary to the minister of human resources who has, as I understand it, the largest and most populous riding in the country. I believe that the parliamentary secretary's riding will soon hit a population somewhere in the vicinity of 300,000.

My own riding has a population of somewhere in excess of 100,000 which is larger than it should be. There are many ridings, particularly urban ridings, where this happens and it will be difficult for urban members. It may well be that we are

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going to have to look at some other way to ensure that people are getting the proper representation.

I do not think the hard-pressed Canadian taxpayer wants to hear from us that we are going to increase the number of members of Parliament. Again, my shock really knows few bounds that the hon. members from the Reform Party could possibly be advocating this. They talk about the fact that there is a process in place. Yes, there is. But as the hon. member who spoke previous to me said, we are here to legislate. We are here to legislate when things are not working in their most optimum way to ensure that they do.

This bill is part of our responsibility that we are exercising to ensure that the House does for the people of Canada what the people of Canada deserve and need, not follow a format that has probably outlived its usefulness.

If the members of the Reform Party are worried about the money spent in getting to this point—as apparently they are, I believe I heard the hon. member for Beaver River talk about this yesterday—I can only say that perhaps the time should have come some years ago to put an end to this. Unfortunately we have not been in power for nine years. Now we are and now we say that this must stop. This is not the way to go. This is not the time to increase the number of members of Parliament and that spending the unconscionable amounts of money, a lot more than was spent already, I might add—perhaps it is the arithmetic that is the problem here—is putting good money after bad.

Again I can only reiterate that it is utterly unbelievable, given what we have heard day in and day out since January 17. I know that my friends here are absolutely astounded as am I. I can see that the member for Scarborough—Rouge River just does not know where to turn at this stage of the game.

That members of Parliament from the Reform Party in all seriousness are advocating that we continue this and increase these numbers is really beyond my comprehension. The time to undertake a comprehensive review of the process is now. I take a leaf from the book of my friend who spoke previously and say: This is what we are about. We are all legislators. It is our responsibility to ensure that the legislation that comes from this House is in the best interests of Canadians. It is time to review a great number of things but it is certainly time to review the electoral process and the way we decide representation and how representation shall be meted out. It is time to tackle this issue because we are still at an early stage in the process. It is time because the existing electoral boundaries commissions have not yet invested the time, energy and funds into holding public hearings.

I wonder if my learned friends on the other side of the floor have any idea just how much that process will cost Canadians along with the addition of all those new members of Parliament. I am quite taken aback by the stand taken by the Reform Party of Canada. It amazes me, as I know it would certainly amaze my constituents. There are individual reasons why we do not want this redistribution, aside from the question of saving money, aside from the reason that Canadians do not think we need more MPs.

(1340)

I will close, Madam Speaker, by saying that in my riding of Halifax I would lose the section known as Halifax Atlantic. It is a wonderful section, the only part of my riding that has a rural element. It has five fishing villages. It has been in my riding since the redistribution that took place just before the 1988 election. I did not win it in 1988, I lost it. In 1993 I won it and I won it in a big way.

I am sure that those members on the other side of the House who are worried about this kind of thing. As a member who has been here for five years I can tell them that kind of change rarely makes a difference in the long run to your electoral majorities if you are a constituency person who works his or her riding. The people you represent are the people you represent, and the geographical ideas that some people put forward as being a problem do not really exist.

The main issue here is saving the money of the Canadian taxpayers. I am appalled that the Reform Party does not want to do this.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean Landry (Lotbinière):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in this House to speak to Bill C-18, an Act to suspend the operation of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act.

As you know, Madam Speaker, my party does not wish to run in the next elections. We hope that, by then, Quebec will be independent. Nonetheless, the proposals made by the Electoral District Boundaries Commission upset several of my colleagues across Canada.

I am not the kind to shirk my responsibilities. When I saw that the commission had carved up my riding of Lotbinière, I did not have any other choice but to react strongly.

In no time, it created an uproar in my constituency. Following the announcement of the proposed reform, around 20 articles, editorials and letters to the editor appeared in local newspapers. It is hardly surprising since the Bois-Francs area was split into three different ridings. The commission wanted to combine regional county municipalities into federal ridings, ignoring certain historical, economical, social and cultural factors.

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To combine RCMs into ridings is reasonable to a point but not if the cities themselves see no benefit in it. For instance, by being shifted from Richelieu to Lotbinière, Bécancour was being moved into the same riding as the other municipality in the Bécancour RCM but was being separated from Nicolet.

In an article published on Thursday, February 24, 1994, in *Le Nouvelliste*, Mr. Jean-Guy Dubois, Mayor of Bécancour, said, and I quote: "It is quite obvious that this exercise by the commission members was essentially a demographic one, and that they did not take into account the sense of belonging in these communities".

And Mayor Dubois added that the Bécancour-Nicolet area cannot be divided. And what about the city of Victoriaville—Arthabaska, the heart of the Bois-Francs area, which was being separated from several area municipalities such as Princeville with which it had real and tangible links.

I can only congratulate the government on its decision to impose a two-year moratorium on this electoral boundaries readjustment process. We are talking about an \$8 million exercise. Eight million dollars to move little lines around on the electoral map, displeasing the majority of national, provincial and municipal authorities in the process, all the while trying to preserve electoral quotas and in fact spending public funds needlessly.

Of course a revision of the electoral boundaries is necessary when certain elements of the Elections Act are not adhered to.

Factors to be taken into account, besides electoral quota, are described clearly in section 15 of the Act: community of interests of the inhabitants of a given electoral district in the province or its historical development. Also, care must be taken to ensure districts are not too large in sparsely populated, rural or northern regions of the province.

(1345)

Recent revisions have shown that more often than not, commissions had used purely mathematical rules to readjust electoral boundaries.

The intent, in this bill, to preserve the integrity of RCMs within districts is commendable but hardly immutable. As we have seen, in certain cases, other factors must be taken into account.

In a commentary published on Tuesday February 22, 1994, in *L'Union*, the chairman of the CNTU Bois-Francs, Mr. Denis Champagne, gave a general idea of what people think: "For an electoral map to be good, it must reflect the various communities and identify the connections between these well enough. Finally, the administrative structure has to adhere to it. Right now, we are in an undescrivable administrative muddle". And

he adds: "Boundaries now divide RCMs; they overlap different administrative areas. . . In a word, I cannot see the current revision meeting our needs in that respect".

That is what commissions must look at. It stands to reason that we should review the legislation governing this process. A parliamentary committee should oversee the review of the Act and electoral boundaries should be readjusted. It really needs to be done. It has not been done in 30 years.

Sir John A. Macdonald himself recognized that electoral power parity was essential, while not being the only factor to be taken into account to ensure effective representation. He introduced the Representation Act, 1872, in recognition of this basic truth: "Although the rule concerning the population of each district has been widely obeyed, other factors have been considered relevant to ensure a variety of interests, classes and communities can be represented and the rule of numbers is not the only one used".

This quote was used as part of a ruling made by the Supreme Court of Canada on June 6, 1991, in the case of the Attorney General of Saskatchewan against Roger Carter et al.

It would therefore be worthwhile to review the Act to make sure that electoral boundaries commissions take all these factors into consideration rather than set arbitrary boundaries.

[English]

**Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to participate in a debate that has gone on for some time now about the right or wrong of suspending the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act. As one who comes from the smallest province in Canada whose seats have been enshrined in the Constitution and where the numbers can neither go up nor down, people might ask me: "Why would you want to participate in this debate?"

I believe what we are proposing to do here is very worthwhile at this time. We have decided to suspend the act and have the committee look at what way we can change the distribution system to make it better. As my colleague from Vancouver Quadra alluded, I believe personally the change should be in line with the way it is done in the United States.

At this time we are all talking about slowing down the spending of money and other things. The talk going around indicates that we have already spent \$5 million but it is going to cost a lot more money if we look at the outcome of the redistribution.

(1350)

I am not necessarily saying that we should not redistribute the numbers or redistribute the seats, but I do not believe at this time in our history there is any justifiable need to add more seats any place in Canada.

*S. O. 31*

All kinds of institutions are looking at holding the line, reducing numbers or not going ahead with other plans. I notice new provincial electoral reform has just come forward in my own province. I have not spoken on what I think of it. They are reducing seats. The ridings in Prince Edward Island are held by two members. There are 16 ridings and two members for each. This is a throwback to the days when there were two houses. It was 100 years ago that one of the houses was eliminated but two members per riding were retained. They are now talking about changing to one member per riding. I do not know what the end result will be in the number of seats.

It is not the best time for us to go forward and increase seats in the House with the added costs. The provinces that would gain are well represented in the House right now. This can continue. After the committee makes its recommendations we can look at the readjustments.

At this time the whole process needs to be re-examined. It has been many years since it has been looked at. We have been using the same formula for approximately 30 years. Everything is up for review in Parliament, everything in our country. It is not such a terrible thing to do so.

Many people have said that we should expand the number of seats or that we should go forward with redistribution. Again I agree with my colleague from Vancouver Quadra. Maybe the way in which the electoral system has operated for the last number of years has not been the best.

For instance, we should have an automatic formula that kicks in after a census is taken and ridings need to be readjusted. Many times over the years ridings have been readjusted to make it better for some members and make it worse for others. This has always been a trend in our electoral system. As a member for some years now in this House and in the provincial legislature I have indicated that it should be done fairly for every person and for every riding. The people who should be getting the best arrangement are the voters. I do not think that has always been the case.

When we conclude debate, vote on the bill and it goes to committee I trust it will be studied seriously. I am sure the committee will do so, with members from all parties in the House. Then the committee will report back to us and recommend that some changes need to be made.

I am sure, as we go along in the governance of the country, there will be many more important issues that need to be tackled than whether we should change the boundaries and add more seats to this institution. There are now 295 seats. As I said a few minutes ago, the men and women who represent the provinces across the country and the two territories give good representation. Of course one would always like to see more members on his or her side of the House depending on what is at issue. I do

not think that is what is intended by the motion although we all know that has happened in many cases in the past.

This is a good time to tackle the issue of setting it aside, reviewing it and at the end of the day coming forward with a mechanism that will make it a better way of deciding on how we raise or lower the number of seats in given areas.

(1355)

As I said, in my own special case perhaps I should not be the one speaking on it, but I come from the smallest province in Canada. We have four members of Parliament and those seats were enshrined in the Constitution. That was one of the arrangements made in 1873 when the province of Prince Edward Island came into Canada. It was enshrined again in 1982 when the Constitution was amended and brought home to Canada. This is given to the smaller provinces so that they will not go below a certain level. It is the same in the United States. Every state is guaranteed that it will have representation in Congress.

As we head to question period, I say that I had great concern about the way we were rushing into this matter. There were certainly representations made by many members across the country to put a hold on the process for the present time, let the committee have a serious look at it and let us see what needs to be done. I am sure all constituents in the country who are represented here will decide at the end of the day whether or not we do the right thing.

As we look at what is to take place in the country over this period of time I am sure there are issues that can well be addressed just as easy as electoral reform. I am sure all members of the House will join with us when we vote on laying the matter aside and letting what is to happen in the future be determined. I know that Canada will be well represented by this action.

**The Speaker:** Order. It being two o'clock, pursuant to Standing Order 30(5), the House will now proceed to Statements by Members pursuant to Standing Order 31.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### WAYNE GRETZKY

**Mrs. Jane Stewart (Brant):** Mr. Speaker, last night Wayne Gretzky scored his 802nd NHL goal to surpass Gordie Howe's all-time NHL scoring record.

Wayne Gretzky was raised and educated in Brantford and his family continues to reside in my riding. Many of us have followed his career with a great deal of interest and enjoyment. Number 99 has won nine scoring titles, the Hart trophy nine times, the Lady Byng trophy three times and the Conn Smythe on two occasions. He has his name on the Stanley Cup four

*S. O. 31*

times, has been a part of three Canada Cup championship teams and holds no less than 61 NHL records.

Off the ice Wayne Gretzky has made a tremendous contribution to many charities and organizations, committing endless hours to help less fortunate groups and individuals. Wayne Gretzky's on and off ice dedication and contributions truly make him the great one.

I invite all members to join me in congratulating Wayne Gretzky on his career accomplishments.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**FOREST CONSERVATION**

**Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis-Hébert):** Mr. Speaker, today I would like to point out that the 25th Forestry Week, organized by forestry and geomatics students at Laval University, is being celebrated. I want to extend hearty congratulations to these young people who are concerned about making the public aware of the importance of preserving our forests.

Let us not forget that trees are among our most important natural resources. From an economic standpoint, in Quebec, forestry accounts for over 4 per cent of GDP, 15 per cent of export revenues, and over 10 per cent of direct employment. The environmental importance of the forest is beyond question: just think of its role as a CO<sub>2</sub> trap.

Again, I congratulate the forestry students at Laval University on their initiative.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**PUBLISHING INDUSTRY**

**Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast):** Mr. Speaker, everyone knows that the sale of Ginn Publishing Inc. was a bungled deal. The issue will not go away. The sale has become the litmus test of the government's commitment to parliamentary reform and to an open parliamentary process.

The Minister of Canadian Heritage stated yesterday that he had no objection to an investigation by a parliamentary standing committee.

The Liberals speak of an honest and open government but the matter has been discussed in committee and government members have thwarted any opposition attempts for such an investigation. It is easy for the minister to call for an investigation at committee when there is no follow-through for such an investigation.

(1400)

This government has broken its commitment to an honest and open government over and over. It will not allow this investigation. We saw today it even invoked closure. What kind of open government is this?

\* \* \*

**NATIONAL ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES MONTH**

**Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Nunatsiaq):**

[*Editor's Note: Member spoke in Inuktitut*]

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, March is National Aboriginal Languages Month. Today I want to honour these languages, the first languages in this country.

I encourage the members of this House and all Canadians to support aboriginal peoples in their struggle to preserve and promote their languages. Of the 53 aboriginal languages in Canada, only three have a good chance of surviving, one of which is Inuktitut which I just spoke.

The NWT is the only jurisdiction in Canada which recognizes aboriginal languages as official languages. Through the federal NWT Language Co-operation Agreement, aboriginal languages in the Northwest Territories receive protection and assistance.

This agreement is significant and I commend its objectives to all Canadians.

\* \* \*

**ENVIRONMENTAL INDUSTRIES**

**Mrs. Karen Kraft Sloan (York—Simcoe):** Mr. Speaker, this week Vancouver is hosting one of the world's biggest trade fairs and conferences on environmental industries. Approximately 40 countries are represented at the Globe International Trade Fair and Conference. Along with the thousands of visitors, their participation demonstrates that the business of the environment is enjoying an unprecedented boom.

By the year 2000 world markets for environmental industry products will be in the order of \$600 billion annually. In Canada alone the industry includes some 4,500 firms employing about 150,000 people. Its annual sales are now approximately \$11 billion and are expected to double by the year 2000.

Globe 94 provides an important venue toward doing business and bettering the environment. It provides a tremendous opportunity for Canadian companies to demonstrate their innovations and find new suppliers, new buyers and new sources of financing.

Globe 94 highlights how sustainable development fosters the development of environmental industries—

S. O. 31

**PARKS CANADA**

**Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Mississauga East):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. Minister of Canadian Heritage is to be commended for tabling the new Parks Canada "Guiding Principles and Operational Policies".

Today is an occasion for pride in our rich heritage. This policy document is the foundation for our national and international commitments to protecting and showcasing our heritage.

[Translation]

This initiative results from the efforts made in the last two and a half years by the many Canadians who took part in the consultation exercise needed to develop and refine the policies.

[English]

The exercise demonstrated how deeply Canadians care about their natural and cultural heritage preserved by our national historic sites, national parks, marine conservation areas, historic canals, heritage rivers, heritage railway stations and other program elements of Parks Canada.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**CANADIAN CENTRE FOR MAGNETIC FUSION**

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères):** Mr. Speaker, on March 20, 1992, the then Deputy Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, Bruce Howe, made a formal commitment on behalf of the federal government to contribute \$7.2 million a year for five years to the Canadian Centre for Magnetic Fusion. This centre conducts research on nuclear fusion in Varennes, using a test reactor called Tokamak.

This program funded equally by the federal government and Hydro-Québec is part of concerted international action on nuclear fusion, a process quite unlike conventional nuclear fission that looks like a clean, safe and promising alternative source of energy for the future.

Despite the representations made to the Minister of Natural Resources by the President of Hydro-Québec, the government decided to reduce its contribution by over \$2 million.

I strongly deplore the government's decision to save a little money at the expense of a major research project in Quebec, a province already shortchanged in federal research and development funding.

(1405)

[English]

**MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT**

**Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West):** Mr. Speaker, let us get the facts straight about the government's compensation report recently tabled in this House. It is business as usual. Although the Conservatives started it, the Liberals could have stopped it but did not. The initial cost of the report was \$150,000 and has escalated to \$200,000.

It recommended severance pay for all MPs even though many have jobs to go to after their mandate. It recommended more money for senators and it recommended a 37 per cent pay increase for MPs. The Liberal Party suggests that MPs deserve a raise because they work so hard.

Let us consider ourselves Corporation Canada and we are its 295 directors. Corporation Canada spends \$160 billion a year and loses \$40 billion. Do MPs deserve this self-indulgence? No. Balance the budget and we will talk about it.

\* \* \*

**ETHANOL**

**Mr. Rex Crawford (Kent):** Mr. Speaker, ethanol is the fuel of the future available today. It is sustainable development, a boon to agriculture, a 30 per cent reduction in harmful greenhouse gases, a plus for the economy.

A \$170 million ethanol plant was announced last week for my riding. It will be world scale, 20 times larger than anything now in Canada, competing head on with the U.S. and using half a million tonnes of Canadian corn with an annual economic impact in southern Ontario of over \$125 million.

It is a win-win situation giving an economic boost to Canadian agriculture while prolonging the life of oil reserves. The monumental and historic ethanol plant in Chatham hinges on one thing. I strongly urge the government to extend the current excise tax exemption on ethanol fuels for over 10 years.

American states, Alberta—

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**IRVING WHALE**

**Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine):** Mr. Speaker, I want to mention the excellent work done by the government, and in particular the Minister of Transport, the hon. Douglas Young, regarding the case of the *Irving Whale*. This ship, which has been called a time bomb for the envi-

ronment, will finally be refloated. This is good news for the residents of the Magdalen Islands and P.E.I. [English]

The witnesses heard by the Gagnon–Easter committee were able, for the first time, to express their fear to me and to Wayne Easter, the hon. member for Malpeque. They were unanimous in saying that it was time to act, and our government listened to them.

In conclusion, I want to congratulate all those who worked relentlessly for that happy ending in the case of the *Irving Whale*. All of Eastern Canada is very grateful for that outcome.

\* \* \*

[English]

**CHRIS HODSON**

**Mr. John O’Reilly (Victoria—Haliburton):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Mr. Chris Hodson, the newest member of the Ontario legislature who won a provincial byelection in Victoria—Haliburton on St. Patrick’s Day.

He has been described as a political newcomer, however after closer examination his family name has a long history, including this very chamber. His grandfather, Clayton Wesley Hodson, was the member of Parliament for Victoria from 1945 to 1963. His uncle, Glen Hodson, was the member of the provincial parliament for Victoria—Haliburton from 1963 to 1975.

Once again I want to congratulate Chris on his victory. I look forward to working with him to provide excellent representation for the constituents of Victoria—Haliburton.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**DEMOCRACY IN MEXICO**

**Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all Bloc Quebecois members, I want to condemn the assassination of Mr. Colosio, the institutional revolutionary party candidate for the Mexican presidential election.

Mr. Colosio was primarily known here as a key player in reform and modernization of the institutional revolutionary party and, since the beginning of the crisis in the state of Chiapas, in January of this year, an advocate of the Mexican election process reform.

Without in any way interfering in Mexican domestic politics, I want to express the general feeling of reprobation among Quebecers in light of this violation of the democratic process of a friendly nation.

[English]

**AGRICULTURE**

**Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke):** Mr. Speaker, people often remark about grain farm subsidies, usually not in a very positive manner. What most people are not aware of is the problems faced by grain farmers which are beyond their control.

Since the 1970s provincial and federal governments and the Wheat Board of Canada have supplied 18,000 hopper cars to railways.

(1410)

In spite of this, some Manitoba elevators have not seen a rail car in over two months. Most elevators are full to capacity and April 1 road restrictions in Manitoba will restrict the movement of grain by farmers.

There are currently 30 ships in Vancouver harbour awaiting grain. These ships get up to \$20,000 a day in demurrage charges and this comes out of the farmers’ pockets. Some ships have left empty after collecting as much as \$350,000 in demurrage charges.

Since the Vancouver port shutdown, western grain farmers have lost approximately \$200 million in grain sales and demurrage charges. Canadian farmers cannot afford this and neither can the Canadian economy.

\* \* \*

**NATIONAL DEFENCE**

**Mr. Derek Wells (South Shore):** Mr. Speaker, the commentary surrounding the recent cuts to the defence budget centres around the closure of four Canadian bases across Canada.

As a member whose riding is losing its two Canadian forces stations, I have to say that the South Shore’s loss is just as devastating if not more so when the economic state of the area is taken into consideration.

However, the communities of Mill Cove and Shelburne have begun the process of adjusting to their losses. Steering committees have been formed in both areas to encourage and co-ordinate redevelopment plans.

Right now these communities are concerned that assets from the stations will be transferred elsewhere. This must not be allowed to happen. It is impossible to make plans if the resources available are constantly changing. These committees have taken on a very difficult task. They should not be forced to operate in an atmosphere of further uncertainty.

I therefore urge the Minister of National Defence to freeze all assets at CFS Mill Cove and CFS Shelburne until such time as proposals can be formalized.



*Oral Questions***GREECE INDEPENDENCE DAY**

**Mrs. Eleni Bakopanos (Saint-Denis):** Mr. Speaker, this weekend more than 40,000 Canadians of Hellenic origin from all parts of Montreal will be in my riding of Saint-Denis celebrating the anniversary of Greece's independence day on March 25, 1821 and the establishment of the modern Greek state.

[*Translation*]

But this year, Mr. Speaker, Canadians of Hellenic origin have something more to celebrate.

[*English*]

On behalf of my constituents of Hellenic origin I wish to thank our government for playing an important role in the Balkan crisis not only in providing peacekeeping forces in the region but for encouraging all neighbouring states to seek peaceful resolution to their conflicts.

We are proud that Canada is supportive in helping to resolve the differences between Greece and its neighbours.

[*Translation*]

I would like to conclude by offering my most sincere congratulations to the members of the Hellenic community in my riding, as well as to all Canadians of Greek origin, on this important day.

*Zito o Kanadas!*

[*English*]

Long live Canada.

\* \* \*

**MIGRANT WORKERS**

**Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham):** Mr. Speaker, the township of Uxbridge is a largely rural municipality in my riding. The municipality is currently being asked to rezone land to allow for an influx of migrant workers in order to harvest 1994 crops.

These migrant workers are brought to our country under a program administered by the Canada Employment Commission. In the case of Ontario for the 1993 season this program was responsible for the importation of over 9,000 workers.

Many farm organizations claim that they need this workforce to address the seasonality of their industry. I note that many of our industries have seasonal fluctuations such as construction and tourism and that these industries do not require the importation of labour. Others question the reluctance of Canadians to perform this type of work.

I wonder with our current high levels of unemployment and social assistance whether farm organizations and the Canada Employment Commission could review this process with a view to hiring Canadians.

\* \* \*

**FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

**Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River):** Mr. Speaker, we have been in this House since January 17 and Canadians have been watching this government to see what, if anything, would be done differently.

What an incredible disappointment it must be for Canadians to realize that the promises of a new way of governing would guide and shape the activities of this government were not to be kept.

Members opposite are a mirror image of their predecessors. It is simply business as usual. The pork barrel is full. The trough has been topped up. Budget forecasting is still less effective and reliable than weather forecasting.

Junkets are still a pleasant reward and used to keep the backbenchers in line. Questionable handouts to business, business as usual. Laughable handouts to special interest groups and pressure groups continue.

How Canadians must lament when they watch this government day to day and see the evidence mounting that it is simply business as usual.

**ORAL QUESTIONS**

(1415)

[*Translation*]

**UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE REFORM**

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval):** Mr. Speaker, not only has the business community reacted negatively to the budget brought down by the Minister of Finance, but we also learned this morning that three out of four Quebecers are disappointed with the budget because it will not make the economy stronger.

The three major unions in Quebec have asked the government to delay implementing the measures restricting unemployment insurance until a genuine comprehensive debate is held on social program reform.

Does the Minister of Finance intend to postpone, as requested by the three major Quebec unions, the UI measures announced in his budget until such time as genuine consultation on the reform process has taken place?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Devel-**

opment—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, there is no question, and the Minister of Human Resources Development has repeatedly said so, that we intend to begin a process of fundamentally reforming unemployment insurance in order to better prepare workers for training and to create jobs. We have embarked on a course that will enable us to achieve this goal and we will stay this course.

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval):** Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Finance recognize that he should reconsider his approach which has been to attack the unemployed rather than unemployment itself? And could he tell us if he intends to put genuine job creation measures on the table in order to help people get off unemployment by working, instead of forcing them off UI by cutting their benefits?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec):** Mr. Speaker, not only have we rolled back the UI premium rate in our budget in order to create jobs, not only have we talked about funding a new training plan to provide more training to our workers, but yesterday—and it surprises me that the hon. member is not asking me a question about this—the Minister of Human Resources Development and New Brunswick Premier Frank McKenna announced a program specifically designed to help Canadian workers.

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval):** Mr. Speaker, the main weakness in the Finance minister's budget is that it does not contain a single project of major significance that would help spur the economy. That is what is wrong with his budget. Does the Minister of Finance not recognize that he must introduce bold measures and join with the private sector in investing in forward-looking projects such as the high-speed train, projects which would give some hope and some dignity back to the unemployed?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec):** Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of his question, the hon. member quoted from a survey which was reported in this morning's edition of *La Presse*. I would like to quote the article in question: "After leading the way in the House of Commons on the issue of the military college in Saint-Jean, the Bloc has chosen not to mention this matter at all in its review of the Martin budget. Instead, on the subject of defence, it criticizes the minister for not making deeper cuts".

How inconsistent, Mr. Speaker. How hypocritical!

**Some hon. members:** Oh, Oh!

**Some hon. members:** Withdraw what you said!

**Mr. Martin (Lasalle—Émard):** You are right, I withdraw the reference to hypocritical.

### Oral Questions

#### MONETARY POLICY

**Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot):** Mr. Speaker, when the Liberals were in opposition, they strongly denounced the policy of high interest rates pursued by the former Governor of the Bank of Canada, John Crow. Now the excessive increase of the Bank of Canada rate that we saw yesterday is another sign which shows that nothing has changed.

(1420)

My question for the Minister of Finance is this: Why did the Liberal Party of Canada promise in the election campaign to redefine the monetary policy, when it is acting exactly like the previous government by obsessively fighting inflation, which has been eliminated, instead of fighting unemployment?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec):** Mr. Speaker, we will maintain the strategy of pursuing an inflation target of 1 to 3 per cent, with a goal of 2 per cent. We will do so because we want to create jobs and we want the economy to grow. The hon. member, as a reputable economist, knows very well why and I wonder why he asks such silly questions.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order! The language is getting a little rough today. Perhaps more moderate words could be used. I would hope that we could speak to each other in a civil manner.

**Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given what he just said, I ask the Minister of Finance if he could explain to us how his position is different from that of the Conservatives?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec):** Mr. Speaker, our objection when the Conservative government was in power was the really savage way they wrestled with inflation to bring it down. But we paid the price and we are there now! After making such hard-won gains, now is not the time to give them up.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES

**Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River):** Mr. Speaker, for four and a half years I sat in the House and watched the Conservative government lose the respect of the Canadian people.

During those years the Liberals promised that when they were in government things would be different.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Miss Grey:** Mr. Speaker, it has become apparent that the government is practising business as usual. The red book

*Oral Questions*

promised: "A Liberal government will reduce grants to business". Once elected that very same Liberal government begins shovelling money over to its friends in business.

My question is for the Minister of Finance. How does he justify the full blast operation of what Terence Corcoran calls the Ottawa grant machine in defiance of the government's own red book?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec):** Mr. Speaker, perhaps the member ought to be a bit more specific in terms of what grants she is opposing. I read Mr. Corcoran's column.

Is she opposing the infrastructure program? Is she opposing the program that every single province in the country has endorsed? Is she opposing the infrastructure program that every major municipality has requested?

**An hon. member:** Perhaps we should have recall.

**Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard):** That is right, perhaps we should have recall, considering that every province and every municipality wants to have the infrastructure program. If she does not like it, maybe we should have recall.

**Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River):** Mr. Speaker, we would love a definition of what infrastructure is and if it includes Saddledomes and hockey stadiums, then we do have to ask questions.

I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Finance also on the topic of business as usual.

Two separate squadrons of members of Parliament and senators are lifting off for Paris in the springtime. One of those groups will be accompanied by spouses at taxpayers' expense.

Will the minister explain to his colleagues that compounding the wastefulness of an already useless junket makes his efforts to cut the deficit that much harder?

**Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard):** Mr. Speaker, first of all I would like to say that the trip does not involve the authority of the government. It is the executive of the parliamentary association that is elected by the members of this House.

(1425)

It is important for us who believe that parliamentary exchange with the rest of the world is important. This is a national Parliament and such exchanges should continue.

Concerning the way delegations are formed and the expenses of such delegations, I would like to remind members that on January 17 this year we announced a plan to reduce costs to the House of Commons budget. In that plan was the way we should restructure our parliamentary association.

I am sure that if the member has enough patience in the few months to come before this session adjourns we will have a new system of parliamentary delegation. I am sure that the representative of the Reform Party on the board will contribute to that new approach.

**The Speaker:** I would point out to the hon. member that parliamentary trips or voyages, if I might call them that, come under the purview not of the government per se but from a committee of Parliament. With that I will go to the third question.

**Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River):** Mr. Speaker, those who travel with the parliamentary associations are not paying their own way. The taxpayers are paying their way.

One final supplementary question for the Minister of Finance, still on the theme of business as usual.

It is reported that a poll commissioned by the human resources department cost \$250,000. Would the Minister of Finance in his efforts to trim the deficit, as I know he is concerned, investigate whether this was the lowest bid the department of human resources received or whether the most competitive bid which was recommended by the department was passed over by the minister in favour of his hometown pollster?

**The Speaker:** We are bordering here on impugning motives. I am sure we would be able to lower the decibel level just a bit.

I would hope that in both the questions and the answers we would not impugn motives to hon. members of Parliament.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

**Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

An Info Update sent to Regional Directors of Canada Employment Centres shows disturbing figures. Out of \$2,355 million worth of cuts, in 1994-95 and 1995-96, \$630 million will come from the Maritimes and \$735 million, each year, from Quebec. That is 60 per cent of unemployment insurance cuts for one third of the population.

How can the Minister argue that his government's priority is job creation, when its only strategy is an attack on 85 per cent of the unemployed, and moreover in the poorest provinces?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification):** Mr. Speaker, these figures are not correct. In fact, the changes to the unemployment insurance program will affect only 2 or 3 per cent of the beneficiaries. I would appreciate it if the hon. member would report true facts, not fiction.

*Oral Questions*

**Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier):** Mr. Speaker, the figures have been verified with Strategic Policy and, if you wish, I can give the name of the civil servant we contacted who, of course, was none too happy that we had these figures. For 1994–95 and 1995–96, they are correct.

(1430)

How could we take seriously the job creation initiatives of the government when the only thing it does is wage war on the unemployed, while hiding reality behind programs like the one the Minister unveiled yesterday in New Brunswick, which will affect 1,000 persons and cost the federal government \$40 million over 5 years, when more than a billion is being syphoned out of the Maritimes in just two years?

*[English]*

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification):** Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the hon. member of the opposition is beginning to suffer from an acute case of selective memory.

The fact of the matter is we did not just announce one program for New Brunswick. We have also announced a major program that will affect young people. We announced an additional \$20 million for young people, 10,000 more spots for summer employment. Our red book put forward these initiatives. We will be making an announcement very shortly. Places will be provided for tens of thousands of young people in internship programs. We have announced programs whereby we would put people into a youth service corps by the tens of thousands.

We have announced programs where we will provide the very major stimulus of \$800 million right across the country for a wide range of new approaches to get people back to work.

We said in the red book that the old programs were not working. The old ways were not getting people back to work. We are dedicated as a government to getting people back to work. In order to do that we have to make changes. I wish the hon. member would realize that change in this world is necessary and not just defend the status quo.

\* \* \*

**INTEREST RATES**

**Mr. Herb Grubel (Capilano—Howe Sound):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. Yesterday the minister acknowledged that Tuesday's rise in the Bank of Canada lending rate is likely to result in higher than budgeted costs for servicing the government debt. He insisted the estimate for other budget items were conservative and that the overall deficit estimate would be achieved.

It looks like business as usual. Does the minister admit that the high interest rates also will have a negative impact on economic growth and tax revenues and that therefore the overall deficit forecast is also too low?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows the current level of interest rates is substantially lower than the level we had six months or a year ago. Yesterday and today the vast majority of economists have said the current level will not in fact impede the economic growth we are now embarking on.

**Mr. Herb Grubel (Capilano—Howe Sound):** Mr. Speaker, why was the Canadian dollar under such heavy pressure that the Bank of Canada on Tuesday had to increase its lending rate 18 per cent, or 78 basis points, to a level of 5 per cent and the exchange rate today has dropped another four-tenths of 1 per cent?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows the Minister of Finance cannot engage in speculating on the reasons for interest rate increases or decreases. I know he also realizes that if the Minister of Finance were to do so, he would get himself into a lot of trouble. I am sure the member would not want to get the Minister of Finance into a lot of trouble.

\* \* \*

*[Translation]***AVERAGE INCOME OF FRANCOPHONES**

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. According to a Statistics Canada study, the income gap between francophones and anglophones is widening steadily at the expense of francophones. In 1977, this gap in favour of anglophones was 4.4 per cent. In 1992, it had increased to 10.3 per cent. This study also shows that only in Quebec has this historical income gap between anglophones and francophones narrowed.

(1435)

Will the minister recognize that the socioeconomic status of francophones outside Quebec has deteriorated drastically, which goes to show that the Canadian federal system is a total failure?

**Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage):** Mr. Speaker, we are of course looking at these figures with great interest. As a francophone myself, I care a great deal about my economic future.

I think we should not jump to conclusions too quickly. Language is one thing, and the economic status of individuals is another, although the two can sometimes be linked. Many factors come into play in determining our economic conditions.

*Oral Questions*

The main thing we can do, in my opinion, is to continue to monitor the situation, gather data and eventually draw conclusions which will be well-informed.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie):** Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying that I am not worried about the minister's economic situation. While he is at it, the minister might as well examine other areas, as we have requested.

Would the Minister of Finance agree with me that, if the income gap narrowed in Quebec, it was thanks to Bill 101 which opened senior management positions up to francophones in Quebec?

**Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage):** It is quite interesting, Mr. Speaker, to see also what is happening in New Brunswick, where the gap between anglophones and francophones is rather small.

**An hon. member:** How small?

**Mr. Dupuy:** One percentage point. I think that we should also bear in mind that the statistics published were for five provinces. As I said earlier, let us wait and see what the studies will reveal when they are further along before answering.

\* \* \*

[English]

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

**Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the government House leader.

There is further evidence that business as usual in Ottawa is continuing. Only a few months ago the Liberal Party when in opposition complained that the dictatorial Tory regime used its majority to ram controversial legislation through Parliament. How the Liberals did abhor the actions they now casually justify.

Will the government House leader stand and tell this House that the government will never again for the life of this Parliament resort to such undemocratic tactics as closure through time allocation to stifle debate?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada):** Mr. Speaker, I said on behalf of the government it will be found over the life of this Parliament that this government will be using time allocation and closure far less frequently than its predecessor. I challenge the opposition House leader to raise this again after a few years and see if I am right.

Speaking of democracy, I do not know why the hon. member is complaining when the majority of members want to have a decision taken. I thought that was democracy rather than having this place run by the minority in the Reform Party.

**Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster):** Mr. Speaker, it was my impression that this House was a forum whereby members could have the opportunity of making a case to convince the other side and that is the purpose of this.

In the Liberal red book the government says it will take a series of initiatives to restore confidence in the institutions of government; open government will be the watch word of the Liberal program.

Is the use of closure through time allocation one of the initiatives that will be used to restore confidence? Is this what the House leader calls open government?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member forgets that with his support and the support of the Official Opposition this House passed a major package of parliamentary reform measures. Is he reflecting on his own decision? I doubt he wants to do that.

Furthermore if the member wants to worry about shutting off debate, why is he wasting the time of this House today with repeated quorum calls blanking out the chances of members even of his own party to debate? That is not parliamentary democracy.

\* \* \*

(1440)

[Translation]

## RIGHTS OF FRANCOPHONES

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

According to many experts, the income gap between anglophones and francophones in every province except Quebec is due in large part to the educational difficulties encountered by francophones. This opinion is shared by the Liberal member for Ottawa—Vanier who told the TVA television network yesterday: "We asked for the management of our own schools because it goes hand in hand with regular management. We still do not have it in Ontario after asking for it continuously for 30 years".

Does the minister share the opinion of his Liberal colleague from Ottawa—Vanier and does he recognize that francophones outside Quebec do not enjoy the same rights and privileges as anglophones in Canada and Quebec?

**Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage):** Mr. Speaker, what I recognize above all is the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. I recognize the Supreme Court decisions defining these rights. I believe these rights should be enforced and respected. That is precisely why this government recently introduced a Court Challenges Program to help right the wrongs done to those who feel their rights have been violated.

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu):** Mr. Speaker, I hope that if the minister believes in rights and freedoms, he also believes that Supreme Court decisions should be implemented, but unfortunately they are not.

Does the minister admit that the federal government miserably failed to ensure that francophone and Acadian communities in Canada manage their own schools, and to give them enough money to have proper schools, not like those in Kingston?

**Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage):** Mr. Speaker, I would like all these schools to be magnificent, but I can assure you that we do not forget those lacking these facilities. That is why a program costing in excess of \$100 million is under way to build and expand schools. This is a big country and we cannot do everything at once.

But I hasten to add that education is an area of provincial jurisdiction and what we can do is negotiate with the provinces to improve the situation. Negotiations are under way where the needs are greater and I hope they will succeed in improving the situation.

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**PUBLISHING INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Dan McTeague (Ontario):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

*[English]*

The Canadian publishing industry represents a \$2.2 billion industry which directly employs over 12,000 Canadians. Many of these individuals are in my riding. However this is one industry that has been battered by recession, by globalization and by foreign competition.

Will the minister tell this House what his department and this government are doing to support the Canadian publishing industry which is so vital to Canada and all our ridings?

**Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage):** I share the concern of my colleague. It is indeed a vital industry. It is one we should support and we are doing so.

I can indicate the amounts we are putting behind that industry. We are providing over \$20 million in support to the Canadian book publishing industry under publication and distribution assistance for the coming fiscal year. We are also providing \$24 million in the coming fiscal year. The postal subsidy for the next two years will be over \$77 million. That is a total of over \$120 million. That is the support we are giving to that industry.

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**GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS**

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Public Works and Government Services.

On November 4 last year the Prime Minister promised to examine the process of awarding advertising contracts. As yet no guidelines have been produced.

On February 1 a well known Liberal campaign manager who is also a close friend and former employee of the Minister of Human Resources Development became a director and owner of McKim Communications. Just three days later a federal contract worth \$5.5 million was extended to him. On the surface this appears to be another example of business as usual. I assume the minister must approve all these contracts.

(1445)

Besides the ownership of this company is the minister aware of an employee or an officer of McKim Communications who is closely related to a member of his own cabinet, and could he identify that person?

**Hon. David Dingwall (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question because it gives us an opportunity to set the record straight.

Not all that long ago the hon. member stood in the House and indicated to members of Parliament that it was a \$184 million contract. Today it is a \$5 million contract. The hon. member should know that the Minister of Health has responded to the specifics of a question that was raised by a colleague, perhaps in the hon. member's absence.

However on the broader issue with regard to advertising, polling and communications, the hon. member is correct. The Prime Minister issued a directive. We are presently reviewing the policy and looking at the monetary sum allocated for the purposes of the particular program.

I am sure the House leader of the Reform Party would concur because in the substance of the question he did not in any way disagree with the government using polling or consulting or advertising for those purposes. I want to assure the hon. member that the matter is under active review.

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East):** Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear that the matter is under active review, but I believe there are enough questions of integrity on the particular issue that I would ask the minister, in order to clear this rather confusing and muddling answer, if he would initiate a public inquiry into this advertising contract to see if there has been any improper or political interference in the wording of the particular contract.

**Hon. David Dingwall (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency):** Mr. Speaker, I am tempted to refer—however I do not think it would be politically correct in terms of the language of the House—to the question as silly.

*Oral Questions*

However the hon. member must realize that an answer was provided by the Minister of Health. The specifics were provided to the House. I am sorry the hon. member does not like the information he is getting. I guess the hon. member would want me to say that it was \$184 million and not something substantially less than \$5 million.

The facts have been provided by the Minister of Health. All the information is readily available. I indicated on a previous occasion that if the hon. member wants the details all he has had to do is ask, slip us a note.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**VIA RAIL**

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance in his capacity as Minister responsible for regional development in Quebec.

This morning, we learned that as part of its rationalization plan, VIA Rail is planning to cancel service on the Montreal—Gaspé and Montreal—Chicoutimi runs and to severely curtail service between Montreal and Abitibi. In other words, after denouncing the cuts to VIA Rail when they were in opposition, the Liberals are maintaining the policy of the Conservatives and abandoning rail passenger service.

Does this mean that once again, VIA Rail will be streamlining its operations at the expense of Eastern Canada, and in particular, of Quebec which will experience far more drastic rail service cuts than Western Canada?

**Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, the document to which my hon. colleague is referring is an internal VIA Rail document. There is no question that the negotiations currently under way will determine to a large degree where service cuts will be made.

If there is no dramatic improvement in VIA Rail's ability to provide service within the budgets allocated by the federal government, then some major changes will certainly be made. However, no final decision has been made at this time because the negotiations are still ongoing.

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup):** Mr. Speaker, how will the minister responsible for regional development in Quebec be able to sanction cuts of this magnitude which will hinder regional economic development in Quebec by severing an essential link between the regions and Montreal?

[English]

**Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, the decisions that are going to be taken with respect to the

rationalization of services provided by VIA Rail are going to be taken from coast to coast, not just in the province of Quebec.

(1450)

The negotiations that are being conducted right now with employees and with the management of VIA Rail are going to have a significant impact on what we can provide in terms of rail passenger services for Canadians within the restrictions that were announced a year ago in a previous budget and confirmed in the budget brought down in the House in February.

How well we do in these negotiations will have a direct impact on how much rail passenger service we can protect in the country, in Quebec and elsewhere.

\* \* \*

**GREENPEACE**

**Mr. Bill Gilmour (Comox—Alberni):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Revenue.

Over the past number of months Greenpeace has been carrying out a misinformation campaign in Europe regarding forest practices in British Columbia.

Canadians are sick and tired of their tax dollars being used to support special interest lobby groups. If groups such as Greenpeace wish to engage in political activities, they should rely solely on the contributions of their supporters and not on backing from Canadian taxpayers.

Will the minister undertake a full scale review of the criteria used to determine tax exemption status for Greenpeace and other non-profit organizations?

**Hon. David Anderson (Minister of National Revenue):** Mr. Speaker, the tax exempt status of many organizations is under close review by the department. There is a series of cases where we have withdrawn that privilege from an organization for misuse of funds or not abiding by the required rules.

With respect to the particular issue of Greenpeace I will take the member's representation, but I know of no examination taking place at the present moment.

**Mr. Bill Gilmour (Comox—Alberni):** Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Minister of Natural Resources.

Given that this misinformation campaign is costing the Canadian economy both in terms of lost revenue and lost jobs, what is the government doing to counter this misinformation campaign in Europe?

**Hon. David Anderson (Minister of National Revenue):** Mr. Speaker, once more the member should recognize that we live in a democracy where people are expected to have differing opinions on many important issues. We have no intention of attempting to restrict free debate, provided of course that it does not violate the normal rules respecting libel or slander.

It is certainly true that the trade offices in Europe are attempting to put forth the correct picture of forest practices in British Columbia and elsewhere in Canada, to follow the same types of processes as they have done in the past with respect to other Canadian products under attack in Europe, and at least to set the record straight.

Once again, we do not expect German or any European authorities to adopt Draconian restrictions on freedom of speech simply to prevent the debate that may be taking place at the present time between some group and some industry. That is not our intention and we will make no representations to that effect.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### DEMOCRACY IN MEXICO

**Mr. Mark Assad (Gatineau—La Lièvre):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Following the assassination of presidential candidate Luis Colosio, does the Canadian government still have confidence in Mexico's stability?

**Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to express the condolences of the Canadian people, as the Prime Minister did yesterday, to the Mexican people for this senseless act. I am sure that I speak on behalf of all parliamentarians as well as Canadians when I offer our most heartfelt condolences to Mr. Colosio's family, to his colleagues in the Mexican government and to the Mexican people following this really unacceptable act.

I think that the President of Mexico and his government are dealing with this terrible situation calmly and courageously. To answer the hon. member's question, the Canadian government is still confident in Mexico's stability and in the desire of the Mexican government to pursue a more democratic political system.

\* \* \*

(1455)

### PUBLISHING INDUSTRY

**Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On top of contradicting himself daily regarding the Ginn Publishing transaction, the Minister of Canadian Heritage still refuses to make public all the documents related to this transaction, including the legal opinion on which he relied to approve the transaction.

My question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage. How can the minister seriously claim that a legal opinion from the Department of Justice can include some confidential Cabinet discussions? How can he seriously make such a claim?

### Oral Questions

**Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage):** Because it is a fact, Mr. Speaker.

**Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata):** Mr. Speaker, does the minister agree that the only way to preserve what credibility he may still have regarding this issue is to order a public inquiry, so that we can find out exactly what happened?

**Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage):** Mr. Speaker, I have already expressed my opinion several times on this, and that opinion has not changed.

\* \* \*

[English]

### OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT

**Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West):** Mr. Speaker, I want to make it absolutely clear that I am not questioning the value of bilingualism but the practice and the cost of official bilingualism as mandated by the Official Languages Act.

Government officials have told me that they are not allowed to report the true costs of conforming to the rules of official bilingualism.

I would like to ask a question of the Acting Prime Minister. Will the government commit to an open debate in the House on the true cost of official bilingualism with full disclosure by all government departments so that we can settle the question of cost of bilingualism once and for all?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada):** Mr. Speaker, these matters come before the relevant parliamentary committees during the studies of the estimates that relate to the official languages policy. In particular, the programs for which the President of the Treasury Board is responsible are studied by the relevant committees.

Finally, these matters are before the public accounts committee. I invite the hon. member to come there to get the facts and find that what he has been told by unknown sources is not correct.

**Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West):** Mr. Speaker, I happen to be on the public accounts committee and what the public accounts committee deals with are the direct costs. I am referring to the indirect costs as well.

Since it is business as usual across the way, I wonder if the government intends to continue with the \$5,000 grant to the Canadian Kennel Club to promote bilingualism. Is it a part of the government's bilingualism policy to train English sheep dogs and French poodles to communicate with each other?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada):** Mr. Speaker,



*Business of the House*

after listening to the hon. member's question, it is very clear that it continues to be business as usual for the Reform Party.

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**MAGAZINE INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina—Qu'Appelle):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

Earlier today the task force on the Canadian magazine industry released its report and recommended that those foreign magazines already operating split runs should be exempted from the proposed excise tax.

This would mean that *Sports Illustrated* which knowingly broke Canadian regulations last year would be rewarded with a permanent exemption from the law.

Will the minister rise in his place today and announce that his government will totally reject this recommendation of the task force?

**Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage):** Mr. Speaker, I have indeed received the report and I have read it carefully. It is not my habit to declare policy without consulting the people concerned, the interests of Canadians concerned and my colleagues. As early as possible I will come forward with a policy before cabinet and before this House.

\* \* \*

(1500)

**GUN CONTROL**

**Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

Earlier today I presented a petition to Parliament with 200,000 signatures asking that handguns be banned for private use. This petition was initiated by Concordia University where in 1992 four professors were murdered by an individual who easily acquired three handguns.

Since handguns are not used for hunting and have no other legitimate use for ordinary citizens, would the minister give serious consideration to the demands made in these petitions: "Where guns are less available there is less crime with guns"?

**Mr. Russell MacLellan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada):** Mr. Speaker, I know that all members of the House were, as I was, saddened by this senseless tragedy at Concordia University. I know all members of the House would want to join with the Minister of Justice and myself in offering our deepest sympathy to the families of the victims.

I would like to say that petitions are the voices of Canadians and, as such, should all be given attention and consideration. I

want to assure the hon. member that this petition will be getting full attention and consideration from the Minister of Justice.

**The Speaker:** Well, this has been a lively day.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Leader of the Government the usual question about the business of the House.

[English]

**Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada):** Mr. Speaker, today the House will conclude the second reading stage of Bill C-18. Tomorrow we will commence debate on Bill C-17, the budget implementation bill. If this is not concluded tomorrow we will resume debate on this bill after the Easter adjournment on April 11.

After Bill C-17 is given second reading, we will call legislation as follows: report stage and third reading of Bill C-9 regarding economic affairs, Bill C-4 respecting the NAFTA side deals, and Bill C-2 regarding Revenue Canada.

We would then turn to the second reading debates on Bill C-7 regarding the control of certain substances and C-11 respecting tobacco.

If Bill C-18 were to be reported from the standing committee before we have completed this list, we would of course return to its consideration at the report stage and third reading. This would then put us in a position to proceed with the government's motion to ask the procedure committee to prepare a bill addressing issues connected with the redistribution process.

Finally, it is our intention to devote a day soon after our return to a general debate on agriculture. Depending on the progress of legislation, that debate could be held late in the first week we are back or, failing that, during the first week of May.

**Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster):** Mr. Speaker, I would just like to clarify if the government House leader could indicate when the report stage for Bill C-18 might be expected since he mentioned it in his report.

**Mr. Gray:** Mr. Speaker, this would depend on the pace of work of the Standing Committee on Procedure which will receive Bill C-18 after this House votes second reading later today. Under the rules, I do not think that report stage could begin until after we return from the Easter break. Certainly we would want to call report stage and then third reading of C-18 as soon as possible after the bill is reported back to the House from the standing committee.

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

(1505)

*[English]***ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES READJUSTMENT  
SUSPENSION ACT**

The House resumed consideration of the motion and of the amendment.

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today as many of my colleagues have to raise some concerns about the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Suspension Act that we are debating in Parliament.

My own riding like everyone else's has come up for boundary readjustment under the current proposals. I saw a couple of weekends ago in the newspaper the boundary proposals. The changes to my boundaries are not putting a big smile on my face. I have an extension of the boundaries, way up into the Merritt-Princeton area. I now have a riding that encompasses everything from urban commuters to Vancouver, loggers and farmers in the middle of my riding, right up into Merritt-Princeton which is into ranching and mining and interior towns that have very little to do with the current constituency of Fraser Valley East.

I have some problems. I have made presentations in writing to the electoral boundaries people to tell them that I will be making presentations to them when the opportunity arises to try and persuade them that perhaps those cities are better served in the Kamloops riding.

I am not willing to suspend the boundaries readjustment just because my own personal boundary is not to my liking. There are several important principles involved here that need to be addressed and that have been neglected by the government.

The first reason I object to the suspension act is that it thwarts the purpose of Parliament in the electoral process. The Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act requires the readjustment of federal electoral boundaries every 10 years. There is a commission made up of three people. Three people form this commission. The chief justice of each province appoints a chairperson and the Speaker of the House of Commons, someone who sits in your chair, appoints the other two.

Both authorities who make up these commissions, the chief justice and the Speaker, share the characteristic of total impartiality. The commission that we are considering suspending is a completely impartial commission. We have to be careful in whatever deliberations we make in this House that we do not take away from impartiality where impartiality is necessary. We

must make sure that any commission is not politically motivated in any way.

My first concern is about this purpose of Parliament. What is the purpose of Parliament?

I would put to you, Mr. Speaker, that the purpose of Parliament is not to interfere in independent judicial type bodies just because we do not happen to agree with the outcome. There is ample opportunity to make presentation to these boundaries commissions and I plan to do that, as I encourage every member to do. However, to step in at this stage and say that because some of the members of the government do not like the boundaries they are willing to thwart the entire purpose of the act is unconscionable.

Nowhere in the red book is there any mention that this act needed to be amended. Nowhere in the speech from the throne is there any idea or thought that this needed to be adjusted. The first whisper of this that came out was when the boundary readjustments came to the members opposite. Suddenly a crisis of monumental importance hit this House. It must be changed, it must be suspended, the judicial process must be set aside. Members opposite for some reason feel that they have to step in and somehow make it right.

I believe the public is going to see this very cynically. Why was this not an issue before? The reason, of course, is obvious. There is going to be political meddling in a judicial process and this political meddling is unconscionable.

Second, this matter has already been thwarted once before. Already we have had suspensions on this. Every 10 years we are supposed to have new boundary proposals. It has already been suspended once before. Now again we are going to set aside a \$5 million commission, having already spent \$5 million, when section 14 of the act says that each commission shall prepare with all reasonable dispatch a report setting out its recommendations.

(1510)

The last instance was in 1991. Here we are in 1994 and we are again not going to have a readjustment. The proposal seems to be to put it off for a couple of more years. We will likely go into the turn of the century running on a 1981 census. That is totally unacceptable, which brings me to my third point, the province of British Columbia.

B.C. is the fastest growing province. Some 40,000 people from within Canada have moved to B.C., mostly from Ontario. The shift in the population is going westward. Thirty-five thousand additional people came from all other countries of the world. We received 20 per cent of Canada's immigration population. B.C. is a thriving region of the country.

*Government Orders*

By the looks of it we are going to go into the next election, whenever that may be, with the same seat distribution as we had in 1981. That is totally unacceptable. I do not understand, even if they were the best of intentions, which I question, why we would be saddled with inadequate representation going right through to the turn of the century.

There are other problems with this proposal. The proposal will increase the cost. Nowhere in the proposal by the government is there anything that suggests that this new review, another review, will save us money. It is just another review.

Every time politicians get involved in reviews and making proposals and considerations, the costs continue to rise. What will be the possible advantages? There may or may not be. History tells us, precedent has been set, that this is likely to cost us more money. It is a tremendous waste of the commissioners' time and our money.

Another point is the principle of openness. This needs to be dealt with openly. It needs to be seen to be open. It needs to be seen to be fair. It needs to be seen to be impartial. All of those things have been thwarted by this bill. This bill is a behind the scenes, I know better than you do attitude that we have seen, as we talked earlier in question period about business as usual. Instead of bringing this out for open discussion, instead of give and take on the floor of the House of Commons, instead of even bringing forward specific proposals, what we find here instead is a process that says: "We know best. Not only do we know best, we are not willing to allow opposition members to raise their concerns to their own liking. We are going to invoke closure".

I wonder when this government handed the new shoes to Mr. Martin if the new shoes were to step on this, to squelch any ideas of democracy—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Order. I would just like to remind members to refer to one another according to the positions being held by the respective members and not their names.

**Mr. Strahl:** Mr. Speaker, I stand corrected and I will make no further reference to the boots.

However it does appear that taking the boots to some of these representations appears to be the purpose of this bill. While I originally prepared a 20 minute presentation detailing the entire pros and cons of a review process, I find now that it has unfortunately been reduced to 10 minutes because of this idea that closure somehow is in the best interest of democracy.

I think I need to summarize it in this way, since I have been restricted in my time. First, this thwarts the purpose of Parliament. Parliament is not to set boundaries to just jump in when members do not like what they see. Parliament is to set up a process. The process is in place. When it continually gets put off year after year it does nothing to enhance people's impression

that this is truly a democratic and hands off process. That is the first principle, the principle that alarms me the most.

Second, as I mentioned, is this lack of proportional representation. I know the government says it is going to review it. It may have more, it may have less. Who knows what the review will come up with when the Liberals come up with these proposals? The fact is that we will go into the next election in British Columbia with fewer representatives than we deserve.

That has been going on since 1981. It appears it will go on through to the turn of the century with the same disproportionate representation that we had to go with this last time.

(1515)

That is the second principle that is undesirable, the increased costs, the \$5 million down the drain and the fact that we will not be able to use the extensive advertising. I have with me the sheet that describes the new boundaries which was delivered through the paper system to every household in Canada. Those costs are all for naught. Many of us prepared briefs and speeches for these advertised meetings. Our work is all for naught.

The fact is it is no longer an open process but instead, when things are not going their way, the process has been cut off. Another nail in the coffin of openness. In conclusion, I have a couple of proposals that I would like to make to the government.

First of all I would ask them to reconsider this whole idea of closure. I have sheets of *Hansard* that I dug up that I do not have time to read out today. I have almost three pages in the indexes from the last Parliament. It took three pages just to list the names of the speakers on the other side of the House that rose to speak against closure and time limitation.

It is a shame that when something that should be impartial and above reproach that government members, many of whom are listed in the three index pages, have chosen instead to clamp down on democratic discussion on this judicial process. It is a shame.

I cannot believe the government would use this bill to invoke closure to stifle free speech in the House. If it were not for the time constraints of Easter coming up the government would probably go on. It is a shame that to get a holiday they are going to invoke closure and clamp down on democratic free speech.

**Mr. John Richardson (Perth—Wellington—Waterloo):** Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me to join in this debate. We have heard many strong negatives both from the government side and the opposition side about the way the revision of the federal electoral boundaries took place.

The province of Ontario is about to gain four seats. I would like to talk a bit about why I am against it. It is not to stifle free speech. The body politic of Canada should have some input into saying where the boundary changes should be made. As a consequence everyone is looking at the House as the sole

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ownership of this. Let us give the public some say in its operation.

Most Canadians and particularly residents of Ontario did not hear about the revision. It came as a shock to them and they had to respond in some cases as early as the next two weeks. So to mobilize, to liaise one with another, to communicate with those groups who have been disturbed, to question why such changes have taken place, the time was not there. We are talking a lot of people and we are talking the affect. I am talking of mobilizing and reacting to the changes in my own province of Ontario.

Ontario presently has 99 seats. One of the rules under which this commission was to undertake change was that there would be a minimum of disturbance of existing boundaries.

They talk about the ripple effect. I want to tell you that if there was ever a ripple it was a big ripple in Ontario to get four seats. Ninety-three of the ridings were changed rather significantly.

The principle was that there be some approximation in size in the constituencies in Ontario. The commission's mandate gave a rather generous leeway. Twenty-five per cent is a rather large deviation from the norm.

As a consequence, in Ontario the demographic computer crunched them out closely with its cookie cruncher to the 97,000 to 100,000 range. Many ridings that were sitting well within that range and smack on 100,000 had radical change and it has upset the communities in which that change took place.

In my riding the county council will be taking a bus to the hearing. The city councils and the township councils will be taking a bus to the hearing because traditionally a constituency has a community of interest. That community of interest is focused on its local governments whether they be township, town, city or county.

(1520)

Many of these fundamental community of interests were hacked in half and for no reason attached to another half of another county that was hacked in half. The rationale of community of interest seemed to go by the board. That is why we are upset. I can tell members that my constituents are upset. This is the second major change in southwestern Ontario and only one riding escaped without any change whatsoever.

As a consequence, I would like to make a point that the ripple effect in 93 of the 99 ridings was not acceptable to the residents of Ontario. These residents are not all Liberals although I would like to think they would be.

I have received protests from people from all walks of life and it does not have anything to do with my being a Liberal member. They do not want to be associated with someone who has been connected with another township. There is a narrow gap and we go back into another base.

It does not even have any sort of congruency or shape. It is stretched out to almost Lake Huron and on the other side, Waterloo county. It was a compact riding of 101,000 people meeting specific criteria where community of interest and size were dead on. The people in my riding want to know what the rationale was for the major surgery in the riding of Perth—Wellington—Waterloo.

I would like to read from the direction and general notes given to the commissioners on their mandate. The act directs the commission to divide Ontario into 103 districts. On the basis of the population of each electoral district in the province, it shall be as close as reasonably possible to correspond to the electoral quota of that province.

We all know that some of the ridings in northern Ontario, by their nature, by the ability to service the constituency, must necessarily be smaller than some of the ridings in the urban areas where one can contact and relate to their constituents in a speedier manner.

For those of us who were in urban-rural ridings, the norm would be about 100,000. The commission may depart from this quota where necessary or desirable. The commission's judgment lay in directives and it has given the two commissioners for Ontario tremendous scope.

First, the commission is to respect the community of interest or community of identity in the historical pattern of an electoral district in the province. That one has been shot out of the water in a big way.

Second, it is to maintain a manageable geographic size for districts in sparsely populated, rural or northern regions of the province. I concur with that.

In considering these factors, the commission must make every effort to ensure that except in extraordinary circumstances the population of each electoral district remains within 25 per cent, a reasonably grand margin of error I would say by any statement. The upper limit of the quota plus 25 per cent from the norm which is 122,000 to the lower limit of 25 per cent which is 73,000 is very rarely reached. The first principle was totally compromised so that the second principle could crunch out ridings with populations of 97,000 to 103,000. The community of interest and the community of economic interest, which is just as important in most of those ridings, was shot out of the water, to use a colloquial term.

*Government Orders*

(1525)

I dare say that with Ontario gaining four seats, I am not prepared to compromise that nor would I like to see my friends from British Columbia suffer any loss of seats. I would like to add a little comparison. Take a look at the House today. These seats have been moved so close together that if even I put on a little weight, which has not happened for a long time, it would be difficult to get between the seats.

**An hon. member:** I am not a health nut.

**Mr. Richardson** I am sorry. I did not mean to reflect on any other member in the House.

However, if some day in the future we approach the population of our neighbours to the south, we will need 3,000 seats in the House of Commons. We are going to have to look at the size of ridings in the country so we can keep a reasonable number in Parliament.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Daviault (Ahuntsic):** Mr. Speaker, I have been in politics for about 20 years, and I have never seen such a mess. I must admit this is the first time I been particularly aware of the social and economic impact of adjusting the federal electoral map.

When I was quite young, my mother used to get bored while my father, who was a travelling salesman, was away, and she would do jigsaw puzzles. After looking at the proposed electoral map, my impression was that the people who drew this map must have been very bored indeed to perpetrate this proposal, pardon the expression.

I found it hard to understand the logic involved in this electoral boundaries readjustment proposal, and I did some quick research on ridings in East Montreal that were affected by this proposal. One conclusion is be that the proposal ignores socio-demographic and socio-economic factors to all intents and purposes. The proposal shows a complete disregard for any concept of community. In other words, it was botched.

A riding should first and foremost represent a community. We cannot get around this social fact. It is foolish to alter the boundaries of a riding and blindly carve up natural communities to satisfy the demands of fuzzy mathematical logic and administrative efficiency.

A member of Parliament is elected to serve the interests of his constituents, not those technocrats who very often have no concept of the practical needs of community groups. A member of Parliament must defend the interests of individuals, community groups and businesses and promote the development of economic activity in his riding.

The proposed administrative boundaries transform a number of communities into a meaningless expanse of statistical data and arbitrary geographic divisions. Let me explain. All this has

no connection with the activities of these communities. I am talking about neighbourhoods, urban districts, people living in a naturally homogeneous environment, which may be cultural, ethnic, religious or economic, a living community, organized in human terms and not for administrative purposes alone.

As I said before, I made some enquiries among my colleagues in East Montreal to assess the impact of the proposed readjustment. Here are a few examples. I may recall that Montreal is divided into administrative units referred to as *arrondissements* or districts.

In the riding of Mercier, the urban district of Mercier-Ouest is cut in two. This means breaking up a natural demographic unit for the sake of mathematical considerations. From now on, three federal members will be working to promote the interests of the same social groups and the same economic organizations, while at the provincial level, a single member is able to take care of the same needs in the provincial riding of Bourget.

In the federal riding of Hochelaga—Maisonneuve we see the same lack of logic. Why cut the provincial riding of Bourget in two? This arbitrary division is as distasteful to the people of Mercier as it is to the people of Hochelaga—Maisonneuve. Once again, this means fracturing a natural urban district.

(1530)

Furthermore, the proposal adds onto the northern part of the riding a population which has no natural affinity, other than geographical, to the riding of Hochelaga—Maisonneuve. It would be more appropriately added to the riding of Saint-Léonard, in terms of socio-demographic affinity.

In Rosemont, the riding will get part of the riding of Saint-Michel which, again, has no social affinity to the population in Rosemont, while, the riding would welcome the annexation of part of Outremont, so that its boundaries would coincide with those of the LCSCs—local community service centres—and urban districts.

The case of Papineau—Saint-Michel is rather peculiar. The riding of the Minister of Foreign Affairs has been struck off the map. What is the reasoning behind this decision? Part of the population of this homogeneous riding, which includes the former town of Saint-Michel, its parishes, recreation services, health care institutions and community groups, has been moved to the riding of Saint-Léonard, a riding which practically coincides with the town of Saint-Léonard. We now have a situation where the population of the former town of Saint-Michel will be a minority, in the new riding.

The other half of Papineau—Saint-Michel has been moved to the riding of Saint-Denis, which will extend to Acadie Boulevard. People in Montreal realize how ridiculous this is. The community resources of two districts in Montreal's centre north will be disorganized as a result.

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In my riding of Ahuntsic, the results are positively outlandish. Parishes are being cut in two and communities divided, just to align the riding on the Laurentian Autoroute. For the sake of geographic convenience, part of the northeast corner of Ahuntsic is transferred to another riding. This area, which is isolated from all other areas with the exception of Ahuntsic, has a large Italian community, which in the process would also be isolated from its natural centre, the Italian parish of Notre-Dame-de-Pompéi. This community would no longer enjoy integrated federal representation. Between this area and its new riding lies the vast Miron quarry dump.

Saint-Sulpice, where I live, is faced with a similar situation. The parish is separated from its community organizations, and so forth. Yet, this neighbourhood portion is isolated from its new riding by the Metropolitan Boulevard, a high-technology centre, schools and recreational centres. The government is destroying an integration process that has been patiently developed for the last ten years.

In the proposed project, we find the same lack of logic that appeared in the case of the riding of Laval-des-Rapides, between 1976 and 1989, when it overlapped Laval and Montreal. It had to be seen to be believed!

May I also point out that the numerous divisions of employment centres do not fit electoral boundaries, which undoubtedly contributes to maintaining the confusion among people towards services provided by these centres and by the federal government.

I would also wish to remind you that the very concept of a one-stop window implies harmonization, at all levels of government, of administrative divisions, so that we can provide services and grants from the same social, demographical and economic territories. That is a major demand by the economic and community development co-operatives, the CDEC of Montreal.

We cannot ignore the map of disadvantaged areas that was drawn by the Island of Montreal School Board, major social and economic data. It is more than desirable that Montreal be given, at the federal level, effective electoral representation which takes into account the indicators of disadvantaged areas.

In concluding, I would point out that the criteria for the division of these federal electoral maps have not been reviewed in almost 30 years. These criteria should be developed on the basis of social demographical and social economical data, rather than on the simplistic basis, should I say, of raw and blind mathematical data! On the basis of administrative and/or geographical convenience that has nothing to do with the real areas where people live.

(1535)

Participating in public hearings on the basis of this redistribution would amount to saying that we view it as an acceptable basis for negotiation while it is not.

Negotiating on an individual basis, county by county, would cause other Montreal ridings to lose their homogeneity.

The overall proposal made by the commission is unacceptable. The parliamentary committee has to start from scratch again. Dealing with the same commission and doing all over again what has already been badly done would only lead to the same results.

The system has to be changed and this is why I will vote for the bill.

[English]

**Mr. Julian Reed (Halton—Peel):** Mr. Speaker, the riding of Halton—Peel was originally created by a gentleman many of us know: Gerrymander.

One would think with the proposed boundary changes the member would be quite thrilled that a new riding would be created. I believe the new dividing line was created by his brother for it splits a community right in two in a line that is anything but straight. Some of it does not even follow road allowances but travels through the middle of farmers' fields.

It is so ridiculous. Part of the farm on which I live is in the new proposed riding and the other part is in the other. There was immediate response from a returning officer, from a Chamber of Commerce and from a municipality exhorting an appeal of that line.

As a bit of an aside, it is also interesting to note the borders printed on the map in the book the commission released. You will see that the new boundaries are printed upside down on the map. It puts part of the land mass in the southern part of the proposed riding in Lake Ontario. It was cause for some concern. We will have to enroll fish I suppose.

Having said that I was prepared to launch an appeal trying to point out to the commission where changes could be made that might at least improve the situation.

I was very disturbed with the proposal to create new ridings at a time when we consider ourselves to be in a period of extreme restraint. When we want less and less government spending it seems this process is creating more and more.

In my region and others nearby school boards are considering reducing the number of trustees in an effort to save money. The last report I saw was that the region of Durham is proposing to cut five trustees saving \$200,000 through that process. It does not really show a great deal of leadership to advance the cause of increasing the numbers in this House.

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Other countries operate reasonably successfully with much higher populations per member than Canada. Australia is one of them with actually double the population per member in its House.

(1540)

We have a lot of things to consider. If we are going to review legislation which is 30 years old, at least it is appropriate that we do it now if it has not been done in the past. As has been mentioned, it may be that it has outlived its usefulness and we have to reconsider what will be done in the future.

In terms of the argument my friends in the Reform Party put forward about time allocation, I would like to point out the reality to them. I do not think it is the intention of any government to impose time allocation for frivolous reasons.

Hearings were scheduled to begin in April on this proposal by the commission. We are now going into a recess for two weeks. I am not sure what the Reform Party would have preferred to do, whether it would have preferred to stay and debate this for another couple of weeks. We could have filibustered. However there is plenty of time in the time allocated to put the points of view across and make sure all of the arguments are on the table.

I am sure the Reform Party is as interested in the reform of this process as the rest of us. I do not think any hon. members would disagree with the fact that it is time for a change. We cannot go on filling up the House especially if we have a few guys my size. If we went on without any changes we would be forced to knock out the back walls, or put another row in the front, or only elect lean people.

I enthusiastically support this thrust. The time has come for change. The time has come to reconsider how the people of Canada are represented. The time has come to listen to those people and give them time to bring their views forward so we can truly represent the people of this country.

**Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak against Bill C-18, an act to suspend the operation of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act. I do that with some mixed feelings.

My own riding is disappearing in this change which is going to take place across Canada and very significantly in the province of Ontario. There has been only one call into my office regarding this change and perhaps that is because they were anticipating going to the hearings, as I was. However I anticipate receiving many calls when the people in my riding discover what is taking place in this House.

In no way was this a burning issue with the people in this country. There are far more important issues we should be dealing with. While I say I had mixed feelings about what was happening in the riding I represent, I was looking forward to

making a representation at the hearings. We would have an opportunity to make representations again when the reports came back into this House.

In looking at the changes I realized there were some winners and some losers. There are going to be winners and losers no matter where this comes out. We will not come up with a plan that will please everyone. That just is not possible. There is no evidence in this bill that will approach anything near that.

There is the suggestion that politicians will be able to do a better job than Elections Canada. That is a leap of faith most Canadians would have a difficult time making. Our track record in the past has not been one of doing a better job.

(1545)

The decision was made 30 years ago to take this process out of the political arena. That was a good decision that was made back then. I think it is even more appropriate today, given the mood of the Canadian voter.

We just have to reflect back to October 1992 at which time politics in the country took a dramatic turn for the better. The Canadian people said back then that they were no longer going to be led by the political parties. They were going to have a say in what was going on in the country. They sent out that very clear message.

That message can be ignored in the House at our peril. The former government ignored the message that was given to it by Meech Lake. The former government ignored the message that was relayed to it through the Spicer commission at a cost of some \$27 million in taxpayers' dollars. The government was told what the priorities of the Canadian people were and that the Constitution was not number one. In spite of that the government ignored it, went on with its own agenda and suffered its fate in the last election.

The mood of the Canadian people that was evident in 1992 and 1993 is still there. They want to be heard. They want to have their say. The process we are about to embark on will be a denial of that.

We are not talking about process today. We are talking about product. We knew this was coming down the pike some time ago, but nothing happened until the proposed boundary changes hit our desks and hit the public. All of a sudden it became an issue. There was no secret about what was happening. It is not about the process. It is about the product and it is about self-interest: my fiefdom and what is going to happen to me. I think that is wrong.

The issue is not new. It has been there but it is in the forefront now because some people's ridings will be affected by it. The government is going to circumvent the public hearings that were to take place so that the public could have input into the process.

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How do we justify wasting the \$5 million in taxpayers' dollars that have been spent to this point? The suggestion has been made that the \$3 million we might spend in hearing from the public would be a further waste of taxpayers' dollars. I do not find spending \$3 million to hear from the taxpayers a waste of money. Again I go back to the mood of the voters. They want to be heard and \$3 million to allow them to have input will be money well spent.

Time and time again I have heard from members on the other side about the number of seats. They are shocked that Reform would support anything that would increase the number of seats in the House. There is nothing in the bill that restricts the number of seats. Had that been in there, the Reform Party would have supported the bill. It is not there. I would ask members on the other side: Why is it not there? There is no intent. It is left out purposely so that avenue would still be there.

Hearings were due to start in days and the process is being cut off. People were preparing to come to these hearings to state their case. Again it is an example of government knows best: "We will decide what should happen here and we will let you know". That is not going to fly with the Canadian people.

I was shocked at what was taking place. Really I should not have been because the government has a track record of no faith in the Canadian people. When we think back, this is the government that did not have faith in some Canadian people to select its candidates. The government had to go in because it did not trust Canadian people to pick the right candidates. This is the government that does not believe in recall. It does not trust Canadian people to have recall at their disposal.

This party is led by a leader who finds referendum revolting. The thought of listening to the Canadian people on major issues is revolting. Those words will come back to haunt the government in years to come. The government can act when it wants to. When it has a self-interest it can get moving. There was something the Canadian people wanted it to get moving on. We wanted it to get moving on it and we were prepared to support it. I am referring to the gold-plated pension plans. This is something that we could have taken action on and should have taken action on, but nothing is happening. The words we hear are: "What is the hurry? We are here for four years". The government may not be in a hurry about that but the Canadian people are. The Canadian people want action. The government brought us action on this but not on the pension plan.

(1550)

The question of the legality of the process was raised in the House yesterday. The answer given to that question bore no relationship to the question. I suspect because a legal opinion has not been sought the government does not have an answer as to whether the whole process is legal.

I see some similarities here between the cancelled Pearson airport deal and what we are about to do today. The Pearson airport deal was cancelled, not because the project was not a good project but because of the process.

**Mr. Mifflin:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Your Honour is well known for leniency on relevancy, but what do the points the hon. member is raising—he is covering the waterfront—have to do with the item being discussed?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** I do not believe the member has a point of order, so I will resume debate with the hon. member for Simcoe Centre.

**Mr. Harper (Simcoe Centre):** Mr. Speaker, the point I was just about to make was on the similarity between the cancellation of the Pearson airport deal and what we are about to embark on here. The point I am making is that the deal was cancelled on the airport four months ago and nothing has happened. We are about to change this deal and I would suggest that nothing is going to happen. We will go into the next election with nothing having been resolved. That is one of the real dangers in this.

Just let me summarize with a few comments. The government needs to have more faith in the Canadian people to look at this matter and do what is right. There will be some very interesting comments coming out of the hearings that were scheduled. The government should not throw away the millions of taxpayers' dollars already spent up to this point. That is what will be done. It is going to throw away \$5 million of our taxpayers' dollars.

This process does not belong in the political arena. With the vested interest that politicians have, how can they address the issue objectively and do what is best for the Canadian people? If we support the bill we will kill any chance for change before the next election.

With those remarks I will conclude. I thank the House for allowing me to make this presentation. I certainly will not be supporting Bill C-18.

**Mr. Andy Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury):** Mr. Speaker, I also rise to speak on the matter now before the House concerning the redistribution of the federal electoral boundaries.

It is clear from all indications that Canadians are not happy with how the review and the proposals for change have been handled. Further, Canadians are reasonably consistent in their message as to why. They will not take judgments from on high without more consultation.

The preliminary steps leading to the proposed boundary changes fail to include local level consultation. It is not enough to hold out the promise of public input later on, because people know how difficult it is to amend such proposals after they have been designed in the way they have. People have once again sent



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out a clear signal that they will not accept another top down, arbitrary decision by government.

Within my own constituency when a map appeared in a special insert in the local paper I heard a number of consistent messages from constituents. First, they were shocked to learn that the boundary changes were even being discussed. For most of them seeing the map in the paper was the first time they had ever heard of the exercise. Another common expression was one of disbelief. After we had all campaigned so vocally about the need to be more inclusive and since the government has practised this agenda so consistently since the election, people find it hard to believe that we would revert to the old style of top down governing.

As members we have all worked hard to gain the trust of our electorate. I know many of us do not wish to see that trust jeopardized when the potential not to do so is so easily avoided.

Another sentiment I have heard from my constituents is one of anger. People are angry, not only because the government had not bothered to consult with them but also because of the incredible amount of dollars invested in the exercise. People were shocked, wondering where was the need for this use of their hard earned tax dollars. Where did it come from? People were wondering why nobody had bothered to mention it to them earlier and why nobody had asked for their opinion.

(1555)

As the member for the riding of Fredericton—York—Sunbury I can assure the House that I felt the sting of this action when people questioned my involvement in and my responsibility for the proposed changes. People were not happy, and that is essentially why I feel compelled to rise today and encourage the government to have this process stopped.

I want to acknowledge that riding boundary redistribution is in many respects necessary, but I take issue with the way the process for determining changes has occurred. I further question some of the present assumptions about how boundaries should be redefined. I addressed my concerns about the process earlier. I continue to believe that decisions should have been made based on consultation with the many people affected. I question how many Canadians know the criteria upon which decisions for change were even made.

We must realize that decisions of this nature have an enormous impact upon the political culture of our country. People tend to feel connected to the regions and communities of which they are a part. We all belong to many types of communities, each of which has boundaries in its own way. In many respects we are defined by our professional communities, our religious and social communities, and for many we find comfort in defining ourselves by our political communities.

My most recent witness of this assertion was during the last election. I watched and worked with people from all parties who travelled considerable distances many times over and who put parts of their own lives on hold because of their commitment to the electoral process. Last October became their focus.

We do people an injustice when we suddenly tell them that they no longer need to feel committed to the region they have always known and that now they must suddenly align themselves elsewhere. Making such a transition is not difficult. In fact it is embraced when those who must make the change participate in the decision making that moves them from one location to another.

If anything, commitment and investment are firmly entrenched from the start. It is this kind of stake in the social and political consciousness of our citizenry that we want to promote among Canadians. Imposing arbitrary political boundary changes upon people works counter to the fundamentals of inclusion and affiliation.

I accept that redistribution becomes necessary when there are major demographic shifts. Sometimes this may mean that the entire country must face reorganization, or it may simply mean that certain regions must change.

The changes proposed for New Brunswick in many respects fail to make any sense at all. With my own riding, for instance, all the rural areas have been disconnected from the constituency and given over to my colleagues' ridings. Were I selfishly motivated I would support the changes proposed since it would make my job much easier. I would not have to travel the considerable distances to reach the borders of my riding. I would only have to deal with concerns pertinent to an urban setting rather than worry about both rural and urban problems as the distribution now requires.

That is not what being an MP is about. I do not want to lose the rich blend of rural and urban that makes our riding a most unique and inviting place to live. It is obvious that my reasons for supporting the motion to suspend the operation of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act are not personally or politically motivated. I know this to be true of my colleagues with a view similar to my own.

I know the people of my riding just as other members are familiar with the citizens in their ridings. We work hard to build communities with our constituents. The people of their respective ridings know the intricacies and peculiarities of their places as well. These are the people who should be deciding where boundaries should be drawn and on what basis changes should be determined.

I do not question the competence or intentions of the commissioners but outside experts do not know our political regions or the people who live there. They cannot make informed decisions

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about changing the lives of so many citizens without starting with the involved people first.

I worry as well that by following through with electoral boundary reform the government will not be seen as acting on its primary agenda of job creation and economic development. I also think the government will find it difficult to convince Canadians that it is acting prudently in its acknowledged need to practise sound financial management.

I fear spending millions of dollars to redefine electoral boundaries is indefensible in the light of the economic trials faced by so many Canadians. The government is recognized as honest, hard working, concerned about citizens and known for practising sound fiscal management. We are not known for excessiveness. We are the ones with the plan to help Canadians through the difficult period in order to make this a strong, united and able country prepared to meet the 21st century.

(1600)

We need to remind ourselves of our own priorities and in keeping with that, we should recognize our error without singling out anyone or pointing fingers in any direction. Simply put, we should cut our losses and move on from here. Canadians are tired of governments trying to justify their errors or failing to admit that a mistake has been made. We are bigger than that. We must move on.

I join others in this House who have spoken against boundary redistribution at this time and I support the call to suspend the act until such time as Canadians have a greater opportunity to be a part of the process from the front end.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Maurice Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead):** Mr. Speaker, it seemed important to participate in this debate on a legislation which would postpone for 24 months the process initiated by the federal electoral boundaries commission. It seemed important to do so since the redistribution of electoral boundaries is not an operation one does for statistical purposes; it is not an exercise for an apprentice geographer who would like to practice his trade and increase his skill and knowledge. Redistributing could change the habits of the citizens and of the decision-makers in a given living environment.

In my riding of Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead, if the proposed reform were to be implemented, it would have disastrous effects. That is why, before we proceed with such a redistribution of boundaries, we must determine the basic criteria for changes which might be necessary under certain circumstances.

In the present legislation, one of the main criteria is equal representation for each and every constituent. This is basically commendable since in a democracy, we must ensure that no

group of individuals has more power or better representation than others. But we must also consider other principles; I am thinking here more specifically of respect for the living environment, in other words communities of interests, as mentioned in the documents presented to us.

When one undertakes such an exercise, one has to take into account the sense of belonging of the people, instead of separating them and creating a situation where it will be many years before this feeling emerges again. That is why I would like to take the next few minutes to explain in graphic details the impact the proposed changes would have in my riding of Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead.

I will first remind the members that, for the time being, as we speak, the Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead riding has a population of 75 000. It is nearly entirely located in administrative district No. 5, that is to say in the Eastern Townships, in Quebec. In this riding, there are two regional county municipalities, structures that were created about 20 years ago now with a view to planning the social and economic development of some communities. Presently, the riding is made up of two whole RCMs and part of four others. I am talking about the RCM of Granit, which includes the Lac-Mégantic area, of which nearly all of the municipalities are in the Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead riding.

(1605)

There is also the RCM of Sherbrooke, two out of eight municipalities of which are in my riding, as well as the RCM of Memphrémagog, of which more than half the municipalities are now part of my riding, and some municipalities of which are part of the provincial riding of Beauce, next to Lac-Mégantic.

According to the proposed reform, the Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead riding would be split into two new ridings, one called Mégantic—Frontenac and the other one, Compton—Stanstead. As for the district of Mégantic—Frontenac, this new district would be primarily comprised of the municipalities of Lac-Mégantic and the vicinity as well as municipalities around Thetford Mines.

This would effectively jeopardize what I mentioned a minute ago, that is to say this sense of belonging developed over the years within the Lac-Mégantic area and the Eastern Townships as a whole.

Let me give you a very concrete example. Recently, two RCMs from my district, namely the RCM of Haut-Saint-François, which encompasses East Angus, Cookshire and La Patrie, and the RCM of Granit which, as I said earlier, includes the Lac-Mégantic area, have agreed on a major economic development plan based on tourist activities around Mount Mégantic which straddles the two regional municipalities.

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It took years of discussions to get these people to see their economic development as a common venture and come up with a joint action plan to develop this fabulous tourist site, thus contributing to economic growth in that area. If boundaries were to be readjusted as planned, Lac-Mégantic would end up in the same district as Thetford Mines and would be split between two administrative regions: on the one hand, the Quebec administrative region and, on the other hand, the Eastern Township administrative region, which includes Sherbrooke and Lac-Mégantic.

This would make the political channels that much more complicated, with more members having to meet to promote issues and more officials having to learn to work together, and that, as I said earlier, is very important and takes years.

This concrete example illustrates the effects a decision to make two new districts out of this one could have. Decisions made by electoral boundaries commissions do affect people in their everyday life.

This kind of decision should never be made without proper consideration and not by officials alone. Time should be allowed to consult the people involved, the general public, to ensure that the result of the readjustment will truly be in the interests of these people.

I spoke more specifically about the riding of Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead, but as chairman of the Bloc's Eastern Townships regional caucus, I must mention that the same exercise would considerably modify the ridings of Brome—Missisquoi, Richmond—Wolfe and Frontenac.

I come back to what I said at the beginning: what is the main reason for making this change? It is to ensure that the number of people represented in each riding is more nearly the same.

(1610)

I would like to give you some eloquent figures in this regard. If you compare the present situation to the one proposed in the reform, the riding of Frontenac now has 61,000 people; the new riding of Mégantic—Frontenac would have a population of about 72,000, so a balance is being restored here.

In the riding of Brome—Missisquoi, the difference is barely 8,000 and in Richmond—Wolfe, it is 10,000 at most. In the riding I represent, the change would be scarcely 2,000, so this argument does not hold for ridings in the Eastern Townships.

That is why I will support Bill C-18, which would delay this process and provide for time to consult the people and involve the representatives and elected members of each of the ridings so that the change we finally come up with will benefit all the people we represent.

[English]

**Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in opposition to the closure or time allocation motion introduced today by the government.

This motion refers to Bill C-18, an act to suspend the operation of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act. It is not good to have the government move to cut off debate so that this bill can receive approval quickly.

I wonder if this is the tip of the iceberg, the arrogance and lack of respect for debate in Parliament. If it is this will be an all time record because even the previous Conservative government took longer than five months to reach these heights of disrespect for this institution.

I am speaking in opposition to Bill C-18, an act to suspend the operation of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act. I believe we should allow the process which began some time ago under the old legislation to continue until it is completed. I submit that there has been sufficient time, energy and money invested in the process to date to make it irresponsible on the part of the government to suggest that the process be halted.

I am aware of the criticisms of the present process which are contained in the report of the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing in relation to the boundary readjustment legislation. I am also aware that the present boundary readjustment process was delayed in the last Parliament with the idea that a new process could be put in place prior to the call of the general election in 1993.

What happened was that the special committee of the House of Commons on electoral reform ran out of time and was unable to deal with this subject. Therefore, the process which we are now involved in began and has run until we now have boundary proposals from the provincial commissions before us and public hearings are set to being shortly.

What will happen if Bill C-18 is passed? We know that the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs will be charged with reviewing the whole process and making recommendations for change. However, can we be assured that the process which will result from this study will be put in place prior to the next general election? I do not think so.

We have a process in place now which if allowed to go to completion will bring into effect new boundaries before the next election. We are assured of that fact. Therefore, the next election will be fought under boundaries which are representative of the population distribution as presented in the last census. Doing anything to jeopardize this process does not make sense to me. At this time I want to endorse the position taken by the Brampton Board of Trade in a letter dated March 22, 1994 to the Prime Minister where it states: "It is not appropriate nor

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necessary for a review committee to step in at this time and shut down the public process”.

(1615)

We as members of this House do not have ownership of our ridings. We should not feel threatened by changes proposed if these changes recognize representation by population. This is one of the main reasons for having our 10 year census so that boundaries can be drawn which accurately reflect population distribution.

If Bill C-18 is approved we may be fighting the next general election on the boundaries which reflect population as it was distributed in 1980. If the government is so vitally concerned about the process of redistribution and whether it creates ridings which accurately represent rep by pop then there is nothing to prevent the procedure and House affairs committee under its mandate and under the new rules to study the matter at length and bring in a bill in due course which would replace the existing boundaries readjustment act.

Why suspend the process of redistribution under the present act while this is being done? Surely the government is not thinking that it won a majority under the existing boundaries, so let us make sure there are no changes prior to the next election. Surely this is not the new politics described in the red book.

If Bill C-18 passes and the process of redistribution is held up once again due to political manoeuvring and if as I suggest there is not enough time after the procedure and House affairs committee reports to put new boundaries into place, then we will be party to the kind of politics which the Canadian people rejected at the last election.

Surely this is not the wish of the government. It is not the wish of the Reform Party of Canada. Therefore let us go forward now with the system we have presently in place. Let the public hearing process begin. If we do this we are assured that new boundaries will be in place prior to the next election. Money already spent will have been spent for results.

However if the government is adamant that the boundaries readjustment process is flawed, and it may very well be, then the government members know what they can do. They can utilize the new rules, have the procedure and House affairs committee study the issue, report back and bring in a bill which we would consider. If it is reasonable, we could look at agreeing to it so that a new procedure will be in effect to accommodate the results of the next census.

In closing, I again want to reiterate my opposition to the closure motion. We have not had a full debate on this motion. This is vitally important. It is a matter of principle for this House and for Canadians. Do we allow the government to limit debate so that Liberals have a chance to fight the next election with the boundaries unchanged since 1980 or do we take costs

and work done into account and public pressure on politicians to clean up their act?

Obviously the government is willing to ignore the wishes of the people. Well, we are not. That is why we oppose this motion and why we oppose the bill.

This morning a government member found it incomprehensible that Reform would support a process that would see the House continue to grow in numbers. I find it incomprehensible that the member was not aware that this was one of the very reasons Reform could not support Bill C-18. There is not, I repeat, there is nothing in this bill that puts a cap on or limits the number of seats. Had it done that, the government might very well have had the support of Reform on this.

I am concerned about one other thing. The member I believe from Waterloo mentioned that he and his constituents were very comfortable with their riding as it is and I can understand that, but I wonder, has his riding not grown in numbers. My riding of Mission—Coquitlam was 116,000 in 1991, having grown 26 per cent from the previous census and is now approximately 125,000. Do I just forget that because I am comfortable with the way things are? What about representation by population?

It is far past time that we started to be accountable as politicians.

(1620)

**Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma):** Mr. Speaker, I am quite amazed at some of the things I have been hearing today. It is quite incredible that we see the opposition to this legislation that we are seeing from the Reform Party.

Significantly, one of the first phone calls I got on this matter some weeks ago was from the Reform Party Association in my riding which was quite concerned that the changes that were proposed would so change the riding of Algoma that neither the present member nor any future member could adequately serve the constituents in a way that they have become accustomed to.

It also was amazing to hear the Reform Party argue for continuing the process as it has been put in place. There is an expression in business and more than most, business influences Reform like no other group.

There is an expression that says “cut your losses”. Yes, several millions of dollars have unfortunately been utilized to start this process but what about the untold millions of dollars of mistakes that might occur should we allow this process to proceed? I say that we should cut our losses.

We could ill afford to allow this process to proceed given a set of rules that do not adequately serve Canadians nor adequately serve Parliament. I do not mean that we should have rules that serve individual members of Parliament. I would be pleased in the new riding of Algoma—James Bay to serve communities in

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the far north like Hearst and Kapuskasing, Dubreuville, Chapeau and so on.

I would be pleased but I am not sure they would be best served by a member of Parliament who in a new proposed riding has to serve an area that stretches from Lake Huron all the way through to James Bay.

The changes proposed just for my riding alone are reason enough to quash the whole process. I am aware of many problems across this country. One only has to look at Algoma riding to see what, with all due respect to the commission—it did the best it could given the resources available to it—changes have been proposed and to see how frankly unrealistic and ridiculous they are.

It would not serve the people of my part of northern Ontario to continue this nor would it serve Canadians at large. I respect that there are urban centres that have seen their ridings bloom to great numbers. We have to do something about that.

It is just as difficult to serve a large geographic area as it is to serve a large population. I have in the neighbourhood of 40 communities right now in my riding with 40 reeves, mayors or Indian chiefs. They need as much my personal attention in terms of my being available to visit with them and talk to them as the constituents in a large urban centre.

I argue that notwithstanding the importance of representation by population, representation by geographic area is equally important. If one has 100,000 or 200,000 citizens in a confined geographic area one needs a lot of staff, I argue, to support the needs of those people. The member of Parliament can travel within that confined area relatively easily.

If one has a riding such as in the case of the current Algoma riding, it is seven and a half hours drive from one end to the other. No amount of staff can take the place of the member of Parliament visiting the communities in that riding.

If one would increase rural ridings because one is devoted mindlessly to population only representation, one forgets that individual communities spread out by great distances will lose access to their member of Parliament. In a way that does not happen in urban centres. It is a different kind of representation. If we do not stop this process and revisit seriously the subject we will never have a recognition that there is a shift that is going on from rural areas to our urban centres and an inexorable shift because of the current rules.

(1625)

In northern Ontario we currently have 12 ridings if we include the riding of Parry Sound—Muskoka. The proposal would reduce that to 10. We have lost seats in the past and if the trend continues next time it could be nine or eight. Where do the people who live in cities come from? Unless they are born there they come from the country. Why are they coming from the

country, in rural areas? It is because of the economy of this country. When there is no work in the rural areas people go to the city even if there is no work in the city.

We have seen a shift in the population from our rural areas to our urban centres partly because of the economy. Should we allow shifts in the economy to so gravely affect shifts in the way our ridings are distributed.

We could have good times again and we will under a Liberal government. In fact I think the red book should be called the well read book because clearly the opposition parties have read it. I am sure we have done more for literacy in this country with the red book than any other document published in recent history. I encourage everyone to read it again because our commitment is to rural Canada. If we allow this bill to go through then we are recognizing that rural Canada is important. We are allowing Canadians the opportunity to have a serious say on how our boundaries are drawn and to get away from this notion that we can only have representation by population.

Again with all due respect to the commission, I think it makes a lot more sense—and I will make this argument to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs—that not only do we have to revisit the subject of representation, but it makes more sense that the first draft of new maps be generated with some public consultation. At the very least, the representatives of the public at the federal level, the members of Parliament, should have some say. I have no problem with input not only coming from sitting members of Parliament but from candidates who fought the last campaign. It is not a partisan issue. Boundaries for ridings is not a partisan issue and should not be.

All of the parties that fought the campaign in Algoma understand the need to have fair representation for the rural areas of this country. There is no argument that the urban areas need full representation too. If we have a riding that all of a sudden because of economic reasons and so on has grown to 200,000 would it not make more sense simply just to carve a new boundary down the middle of that riding and make two ridings of 100,000? Rather than have a domino effect throughout an entire province why not simply look at the problems.

We may want to add seats to Parliament but that is something we can debate later on. We cannot cap the number of seats here forever, but we want to consider how quickly the number of seats rises. However, if we are going to make corrections it is much better to look at the problem areas and do some fine-tuned adjustments.

If we look at northern Ontario, the changes that have been proposed are so strange and so massive that it does not seem logical. I use the riding of Algoma and the proposed riding of Algoma—James Bay as classic examples of why this system does not work. I say to my Reform friends, and I have a lot of respect for my Reform friends, to consider what they are doing

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here in arguing against rural Canada. We need a system that works.

On that note, I would just say that this is not an issue of limiting debate. We want to give Canadians adequate time to consider new rules. The less time we take here the more time Canadians will have.

(1630)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to speak today on this bill to suspend the operation of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act and to voice my support for the proposed legislation because, in my view, we are not prepared to make the changes that have been recommended by the electoral boundaries commissions.

Several years ago, following a recommendation from a provincial electoral boundaries commission to eliminate a riding in the eastern part of the province of Quebec, we launched a study to determine the criteria by which a riding is defined. Our study took into account not only the population of the riding, but a number of other factors such as the overall size of the riding, the number of municipalities and regional municipalities and so forth.

It is important that we endorse this bill today and that we reject the amendment moved by the Reform Party so that we can come to a clearer understanding of what the electoral map of the future should look like.

Let me describe to you, for example, the situation in eastern Quebec. At present there are five ridings in eastern Quebec: the riding of Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine which is represented by a Liberal MP, Mr. Patrick Gagnon; the riding of Gaspé which is represented by Bloc MP Mr. Yvan Bernier; the riding of Matapédia—Matane held by Mr. René Canuel, the riding of Rimouski—Témiscouata held by Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay and lastly, my riding of Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup. Under the proposed electoral boundaries reform, one of these ridings is slated to disappear.

Some notable differences can be found as far as the four proposed ridings are concerned. For example, according to the new electoral map, in the riding of Gaspé, more than 330 kilometres would separate the towns of Amqui and Gaspé. Or should I say a distance of 330 kilometres in the summer, and 1,000 kilometres in the winter?

Moreover, each of the existing five ridings has developed its own unique culture. These cultures have been in place for many years. They did not emerge suddenly when the ridings were created. They existed long before then. There is a certain

homogenous quality to the social fabric of each riding, based on its socioeconomic calling, its distinctive geographical features and its history. The proposed redrawing of the electoral map, a process based solely on making a demographic calculation and on dividing the number of people by the number of ridings, in no way satisfies the development requirements of a region like ours.

In my opinion, other factors must be taken into consideration or else we will remain locked in a vicious circle where each time a region's population declines, the number of elected representatives will be reduced. A region represented by fewer MPs has less influence in government. Therefore, our regions will continue their downward spiral. An electoral map drawn solely on the basis of population would be a virtual insult to rural areas.

Therefore, it is important that we take the time to review the situation and find other criteria for determining electoral boundaries. All I can say is that we would prefer the status quo to a new electoral map which would wipe out a riding in eastern Quebec. If a riding was eliminated, future elected representatives would find themselves with ridings that are far too large. They would have to deal with new municipalities.

For example, in my riding of Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup which would take in the regional municipality of Témiscouata, there would be over 60 municipalities grouped together in four different regional municipalities: Basques, 11 municipalities; Rivière-du-Loup, 16 municipalities; Kamouraska, 18 municipalities; Témiscouata, 20 municipalities. Elected representatives might need longer parliamentary breaks just to travel to the various parts of their ridings.

(1635)

For instance, the population of the riding would increase from 73,747 to more than 88,000 over a really vast area. But the disappearance of a riding like that one also has a negative economic impact because it would require additional financial resources. With the economic difficulties we are now facing, there is no guarantee that the four new ridings replacing the five old ones would get more money to pursue their economic development, which would in the end compromise representation for each municipality.

If more money were made available, we would have to determine if the increase is significant and adequately meets the demands of the municipalities. This reform of the electoral map would have all kinds of administrative repercussions. For example, in the areas covered by Canada Employment Centres, various such elements do not seem relevant to us at a time when the population is feeling insecure regarding the effects of reforms, as it does in Eastern Quebec with respect to unemployment insurance. The increase in the number of weeks of work required to qualify for benefits is already something the region

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must respond to quickly and come to grips with, without us adding other contradictions like reducing the number of ridings.

The commission's proposals to readjust the current boundaries of Eastern Quebec ridings raise many questions. I speak as the member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup but also as chairman of the Bloc Québécois caucus from Eastern Quebec. I also think all members from the East are surely aware of the impact such a decision would have. We would much prefer to maintain the status quo and, in that sense, the bill would allow the elections commission to gain time, maybe to think of other criteria to be considered in future, and to come up with much more reasonable solutions.

In conclusion, I would say that figures sometimes speak louder than words. Let us look at the geographical size of the existing constituencies: Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine would go from 8,155 to 11,375 square kilometres; Gaspé would go from 12,268 to 17,783 square kilometres and would become part of the new Gaspé—Matane constituency; Matapédia—Matane would disappear; Rimouski—Témiscouata would go from 6,367 to 8,564 square kilometres. In the case of Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, or Témiscouata, it would go from 6,367 to 8,564 square kilometres. Those are truly huge areas, which it would be almost impossible to represent adequately.

The Bloc Québécois is pledged to protecting Quebec's interests. For us, that means promoting sovereignty, but we are also representing a population which will have to make a decision regarding its constitutional future. We certainly do not want to abdicate our responsibilities by saying that, according to our scenario, there will not be another federal election. We want to be totally honest and ensure that, regardless of their decision, those whom we represent will enjoy the best possible conditions, whether it is within the Canadian federation if they so choose, or in a different structure.

In conclusion, it is important to support this bill, especially considering the savings involved, since the amendment proposed by the Reform Party would result in hearings being held and in a postponement of the debate. We would end up wasting money on a commission with no specific criteria, and we would still have to look at the whole issue later on. Let us be clear with the public. They just voted in an election, they can wait a little for electoral reform to be completed. It may be that the definitions of RCMs were taken into account in establishing the criteria and that is interesting. However, as regards the rest of this process, let us give ourselves some more time. That way, if we have to use that electoral map again, Canadians will be ensured of the best possible representation.

(1640)

*[English]*

**Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in support of the bill and the motion currently before the House.

I am not surprised to see a number of the opposition rising and joining what has been called around here from time to time the ranks of the perpetually indignant. I know of what they speak because it was not but a few months ago I sat in opposition myself.

They are upset or feign being upset because of the use of time allocation. I understand that too because I sat over there. There is a reason the government believes that the time should be allocated. I ask the members opposite, as we have debated this throughout today would the result be any different in the ultimate vote if we had extended the time for debate? Under all the circumstances I think not.

I want to explain why I support the bill. Notwithstanding that I have a riding with over 150,000 people, I could sure use a smaller riding, as could my staff. So could many other members whose ridings exceed the norm of 90,000 or 100,000 people. That is one reason I might want to see this redistribution process go ahead immediately.

I come from the province of Ontario which would get another four seats in the process. Therefore my Ontario colleagues and I would probably want to see the bill go ahead and we would have another four seats. Why do I not want that to happen?

The reason is that the process as currently constructed will increase the membership in the House of Commons to 301. That is a very significant item because a close look at the statutes indicates that growth continues. It goes on and on over the years. MPs have realized it is time to put a stop to that.

I want to correct one item. One of the members who spoke within the last half hour said the last time there had been a change in the electoral boundaries was in 1980. That is not accurate. The last electoral boundary change took place for the 1988 election. I know because I was elected in 1988 on the new boundaries. The process took place in 1986–87. It is not long ago that redistribution took place. I have nothing against redistribution, in fact I am in favour of it.

Getting back to what I was speaking on a few moments ago, I sit on the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. About a month ago the Chief Electoral Officer was before us describing the process.

At that time I and other members spoke on the issue of the increase in the number of members. For every new member we add to this House, it costs the taxpayer roughly half a million

dollars. Add six members and that is \$3 million per year. That is an annual cost of \$3 million forever. That is the financial issue.

I have not even mentioned the cost of renovating the House of Commons. Every time a piece of carpet, a wire or a pipe is installed it seems to cost us \$10,000. There just is not any more room in this House. There would have to be a significant renovation.

In any event, 301 members is not what Canadians want. They want a Parliament that works. They want to see it work with 295 members and not 301 or 310 or 320 as time goes on. In my view the position the opposition parties are taking seems to be a desire to show blind submission to a process that was put in place about 30 years ago and keeps on growing, keeps on causing the numbers of members of Parliament to grow and the costs to grow.

(1645)

A number of the interventions today were from members of the Reform Party. I would have thought there would be some element of reform in the way they are addressing this.

I accept that the redistribution process is calculated to be fair and that it is there for a reason. But lying behind that is the growth in the numbers of MPs and I want to put a stop to that.

Yes, \$5 million has been spent on the current process. But how much more money would continue to be spend on the existing process if we did not stop it right now? If we do not stop it this month or next month we will continue to spend the rest of the \$8 million and I suspect, as per usual, it would not be a surprise to see them go away beyond budget. The process simply has to be completed.

I will tell the House why I support this bill. It is because I want to cap the growth in the number of MPs in the House. The only way to do it is to grab hold of this process and stop it dead right now. Put it on ice because the changes to cap the growth in the number of members in the House involves a change in the Constitution. We do not make those overnight in this place. I do not think any country makes constitutional changes overnight.

This is the way to do it. The matter is to be referred to the procedure and House affairs committee, an all-party committee, not a Liberal mechanism as was alluded to earlier by one of the Reform Party members. It is an all-party committee and it will study the issue and report back to the House where the issue will be debated. I cannot imagine that the government would want to put closure on that debate when it comes back. However, at the moment we have to do this piece of business to stop the growth and the procedure. If we do not do this, within a year or two it is going to give us 301 MPs running in the next federal election.

*Royal Assent*

I will end there. I hope the message is clear. I hope some of my colleagues opposite will understand it. We will redistribute the boundaries at some point. We have to. We certainly have to in my riding. However, let us get a handle on the number of MPs that are needed to serve the country as a whole, refashion that process, refashion that mechanism first.

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**MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE**

**The Speaker:** I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed certain bills.

**ROYAL ASSENT**

[English]

**The Speaker:** Order. I have the honour to inform the House that a communication has been received as follows:

March 24, 1994

Mr. Speaker:

I have the honour to inform you that the Honourable Beverley McLachlin, Puisne Judge of the Supreme Court of Canada, in her capacity as Deputy Governor General, will proceed to the Senate chamber today, the 24th day of March, 1994 at 4.45 p.m. for the purpose of giving royal assent to certain bills.

Yours sincerely,

Anthony Smyth  
Deputy Secretary Policy,  
Programming and Protocol

(1650)

A message was delivered by the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod as follows:

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Deputy to the Governor General desires the immediate attendance of this honourable House in the chamber of the honourable the Senate.

Accordingly, the Speaker with the House went up to the Senate chamber.

(1700)

*And being returned:*

**The Speaker:** I have the honour to inform the House that when the House did attend Her Honour the Deputy to His Excellency the Governor General in the Senate chamber, Her Honour was pleased to give in Her Majesty's name, the royal assent to the following bills:

Bill C-3, an act to amend the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements and Federal Post-Secondary Education and Health Contributions Act—Chapter No. 2.

Bill C-5, an act to amend the Customs Tariff—Chapter No. 3.

Bill C-14, an act to provide borrowing authority for the fiscal year beginning on April 1, 1994—Chapter No. 4.



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Bill C-19, an act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the public service of Canada for the financial year ending the 31st March, 1994—Chapter No. 5.

Bill C-20, an act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the public service of Canada for the financial year ending the 31st March, 1995—Chapter No. 6.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

### ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES READJUSTMENT SUSPENSION ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion and of the amendment.

**Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod):** Mr. Speaker, I wanted to rise in the House today and do something unusual. I wanted to compliment the Liberals across the way. I wanted to compliment them on the red book.

In my view the red book is an unusual process in Canadian electoral politics. The red book is a departure from the standard fare of Canada's process. The red book actually lays out in front of all Canadians some promises which the party said was its platform and upon which its members would present their issues.

I wanted to compliment them as well on their motives. I believe theirs are pure motives. They do have the best interests of Canada at heart.

(1705)

While we may have philosophical differences, the fact is we basically want the same things for our children. We want a good education and good jobs for our children. We would like safe streets for our kids and we would like safety nets if our children have serious problems in their lives.

The government has a role to play in those goals. Our government probably has lost some popularity in Canada. I reflect upon some poll results I read the other day. In terms of occupations, politicians were on the bottom rung just being beaten by lawyers. I wondered how we could improve the image of politicians.

I actually explored the red book wondering what my colleagues were attempting to do in terms of improving the image of politicians. I found that a Liberal government would take a series of initiatives to restore confidence in the institutions of government. That is on page 92 of the red book. I went a little farther and found that MPs would be more able to draft legislation. There would be a parliamentary review of some senior Order in Council appointments. I thought that was good stuff. My compliments for those things in the red book.

I did find some inconsistencies. I am sure members did not think the compliments would last forever. There is a disadvantage to first being in opposition and subsequently occupying the government benches. The disadvantage is there is a visible and vocal record. That record is on the use of closure by time allocation.

I refer to some documentation that expresses what the members opposite said not so very long ago: "This government is trampling on the rights of Parliament. A Liberal government would never do such a thing. This is a complete breach of parliamentary practice. It is a shocking display of the inability of the government to come to grips with the fact that it was elected to be responsible to this House of Commons. It was elected to do so and it is not being responsible. It is trampling all over this House".

It goes on: "One thing we are labouring under tonight is a closure motion. I could not go along with that bill without expressing my distaste at the activities of the government. It is a disgraceful performance. The government is obviously fearful of bringing its legislation before Parliament and having it exposed to the light of public scrutiny. If I had introduced legislation of the kind the government has, I would be embarrassed as well. I want to again say in the strongest terms that by using closure in this debate the government has shown complete contempt for democracy".

This is quite a fat document. I could go on but maybe I should stop.

**An hon. member:** More.

**Mr. Hill (Macleod):** I hear a cry for more. That is the way the hon. member was talking about closure then, referring to another comment. He sits here deadly silent now. He does not dare discuss this issue now because he knows what he said then was right. This is talking about someone else from the other side who had crossed and had the same problem with closure.

I want to make it very plain, the use of time allocation and closure is wrong. It is draconian. They both limit the debate on issues to a time period convenient to the government. They are like a calm and beautiful sea: very appealing to the senses, but a rocky reef lies just beneath the surface. I wonder what it is about crossing from this side to that side of the House. Suddenly the issue seems to be very different.

(1710)

I also have a great deal of difficulty listening to some of the arguments from members opposite saying that we should swallow the soup of this bill because in it the bill allows us to limit the number of parliamentarians. That one part of the proposal I wholeheartedly endorse. I do not think Canada needs more than 295 parliamentarians. I promise if my colleagues brought a bill to us which said that one thing, they would have wholehearted concurrence from this group of Reformers.

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However when it is brought with a soup full of other things, one does not get concurrence. Referring to that one issue in this bill does not make the soup palatable because the soup contains the strychnine of closure. That is not correct. I repeat: Bring to us a bill that says Parliament will not need to grow. Bring to us a bill that says Parliament can shrink and support will be immediate and forthcoming.

This brand new Parliament gives us the opportunity to change the way Parliament functions. We have the opportunity in this Parliament to say no to things like time allocation. We have an opportunity in this Parliament to say no to party meddling in boundary changes. We have an opportunity in this Parliament to say no to wasting \$5 million of taxpayers' money on an exercise that need not be stopped completely. It could be modified. We have an opportunity with new parliamentarians to say no to this type of politics.

In my riding there are problems with the boundary adjustments which are fairly major. However I would rather lose the next election because of boundary changes that were not proper. I would rather lose that election than be saddled with a parliamentary process like this one.

I take this opportunity to express these things in the strongest way I can. If the issue of closure and time allocation was right when they were on this side of the House then it is right when they are on that side. You cannot change the colour of your underwear when you cross the floor. You have to have some basic principles. You cannot change the colour of your hat because you have gone from this side to that side. You have to have basic principles. It is not good enough to just espouse vocally from this side of the House to that side of the House. There must be some principle. We cannot have it both ways.

I speak against this bill, this closure and this process and I do it as strongly as I can.

**Mr. Gurbax Singh Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to participate in this important debate on the motion for second reading and reference to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs of Bill C-18, an act to suspend the operation of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act. It is for several reasons that I have a special interest in the process of redistribution of electoral districts in our country which is now under way.

First, the electoral district of Bramalea—Gore—Malton which I have the honour to represent in this House lies within the cities of Mississauga and Brampton in the regional municipality of Peel, one of the fastest growing areas in Ontario between the 1981 and 1991 census.

(1715)

Second, on the basis of the 1991 census, the combined cities of Mississauga and Brampton are entitled to two of the four electoral districts which are to be added to the total for Ontario, raising that number from 99 to 103.

Third, Bramalea—Gore—Malton would, in my view, be changed without good reason by the current proposals of the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for Ontario.

As all hon. members are aware, the Constitution Act of 1867 requires that there be a readjustment in the number of members of the House of Commons after every 10 year census. The procedure for calculating the number of members of the House of Commons to which each province or territory is entitled is set out in sections 51, 51(a) and 52 of the Constitution Act of 1867. The procedure for establishing the boundaries of the electoral districts which will be represented in the House of Commons is set out in the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act.

I will not go into details of the procedures to be followed but would refer hon. members to the clear summary of those procedures provided by the hon. government House leader in his speech on Monday, March 21, 1994 which opened the debate on second reading and reference stage of Bill C-18. I would also refer hon. members to the excellent booklet entitled *Representation in the Federal Parliament* which has been prepared by and is available from Elections Canada.

For the purpose of clarity of debate, it should be emphasized that the calculation of the number of members of the House of Commons and the establishment of the boundaries of electoral districts are based on the number of people in a given area, never on the basis of the number of voters.

I would now like to turn from the general to the particular and describe how the electoral district of Bramalea—Gore—Malton would be affected by the current proposals of the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for Ontario.

Let us start with the facts that as a consequence of the 1991 10 year census it has been determined that the province of Ontario is entitled to 103 members of the House of Commons and that the electoral quota for Ontario is 97,912, the ideal population for each of the 103 electoral districts assigned to the province.

The population of the cities of Mississauga and of Brampton have increased dramatically in the 10 year period between the 1981 and the 1991 census. In 1981, the population of Mississauga was 315,056 and that of Brampton was 149,030 for a total population of 464,086 for the two cities. That population entitled the two cities to the five electoral districts established under the 1987 representation order, namely Mississauga East, Mississauga West, Mississauga South, Brampton and Brampton—Malton. The name Brampton—Malton was changed to Bramalea—Gore—Malton in 1990. The 1987 representation

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order provided for the first division of the city of Brampton between two electoral districts. Brampton had previously always been entirely within one electoral district, either Peel or Brampton—Halton Hills or Brampton—Georgetown.

The 1991 census disclosed that the population of Mississauga had grown to 463,388, and that of Brampton to 234,445, for a total combined population of 697,833. That population now entitles the two cities to two additional electoral districts, for a total of seven.

As I stated earlier, the electoral quota for Ontario is 97,912. If one calculates an electoral quota for the combined two cities by dividing their total population of 697,833 by the number of electoral districts to which they are entitled, namely seven, the resulting quota for the two cities is 99,690.

(1720)

At page 13 of its proposals, the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for Ontario in the course of its comments with regard to Metropolitan Toronto, Etobicoke states that three districts within the city of Etobicoke would average about 103,000 which is close to what the commission believes appropriate for urban districts. The city of Etobicoke lies immediately to the east of the cities of Mississauga and Brampton.

The population of Bramalea—Gore—Malton according to the 1991 census was 103,589 which is 5,677 above the electoral quota for Ontario and 3,899 above the electoral quota for the combined cities of Mississauga and Brampton. However the population of Bramalea—Gore—Malton is only 589 above 103,000 which is close to what the commission believes appropriate for urban districts.

It would therefore appear that there is no urgent and pressing necessity to alter the existing boundaries of Bramalea—Gore—Malton.

However the commission was not satisfied with the situation. After deciding that the electoral district of Mississauga South should remain unchanged with a population of 96,208 and that Mississauga East should be altered in area to reduce its population to 101,300, the commission decided to perform major surgery on Bramalea—Gore—Malton to cut its population back to 96,360 from 103,589.

The commission accomplished this feat by removing an area of Brampton lying east of Dixie Road and having a population of 36,593 from the northern part of the electoral district and adding a piece of the northwestern corner of Mississauga with a population of 29,364, most of whom live south of Highway 401 to the southwestern edge of the electoral district, for a net population reduction of 7,229.

This exercise seems to me to resemble cutting one end off a blanket and then sewing most of it back on to the other end in an effort to make a small reduction in the size of the blanket.

In addition the commission appears to have clearly violated one of its own operating principles. Highway 401 forms the entire southern boundary of Bramalea—Gore—Malton. In the course of its comments with regard to metropolitan Toronto, the area north of Highway 401, the commission states at page 15 of its proposals that “the commission believes that Highway 401 forms a physical barrier and should be used as a boundary wherever possible”.

The proposed addition of the populated area south of Highway 401 to the rump of Bramalea—Gore—Malton runs directly contrary to the commission’s view on the role of Highway 401.

The commission’s proposal would create a distorted electoral district resembling a reversed letter *L* of which both extremities would have less in common and be further apart than is now the case within Bramalea—Gore—Malton, thus diluting the community of interest or community identity in the electoral district. Hon. members will thus understand why I have serious concerns as to how the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for Ontario is carrying out its mandate.

Inequality of representation in this House has also been encouraged by the provisions of section 15(2) of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act which provides for a maximum deviation of 25 per cent above or below the electoral quota for an electoral district in a province. In other words, if the electoral quota for Ontario is 100,000, meaning that each resident of the province would have equal representation in this House if the population of each electoral district was 100,000, it would still be perfectly possible and legal to have some electoral districts with populations as low as 75,000 and others with populations as high as 125,000.

(1725)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Order. It is with reluctance that I rise but the member has used up his full 10 minutes. If the member is going to be just a little longer we might ask the House if there is unanimous consent that he might conclude his remarks.

Would there be unanimous consent to allow the member for Bramalea—Gore—Malton to conclude his remarks?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Malhi:** Mr. Speaker, the subject of what shall be an appropriate number of members of Parliament has been referred to frequently in this debate.

At this point I would simply raise for consideration the possibility that perhaps this House would operate more efficiently and effectively if there were dramatically fewer members of Parliament than at present and that there be a fixed number. Those fewer members would have more extensive

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staffs and research facilities but I believe the long term savings could be significant. Such a proposal would certainly merit consideration by the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** I thank the member for his co-operation.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis):** Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I rise to take part, as member for Lévis, in this debate on Bill C-18 to suspend for 24 months the operation of electoral boundaries readjustments across Canada.

You know it is not always easy to speak in a debate so late in the day without repeating what our hon. colleagues from both sides of the House have already said. I will speak anyway, because I think it is important to talk about democracy and its operation. We can never talk too much about democracy and truly democratic rules in this House. So, this bill gives me an opportunity to raise this extremely important issue.

Like my fellow members of the Official Opposition, I support this bill. I will not go over all their arguments, although I agree with the points like the savings to be made by deferring this readjustment for one thing. Members opposite also mentioned it would give more time to do a more thorough job and to better target readjustments to the democratic reality. I will simply insist on one point.

As you know, provincial elections are to be held this year and, normally, within 12 or 14 months of the elections, we should have a referendum in Quebec. So, if all goes well—and I honestly think, along with my colleagues, that it will—we are going to find ourselves in a totally new political context. Under the circumstances, what is the use of redesigning the electoral map when it may not be used by Quebec in future elections? It is therefore wise and perfectly advisable to wait and to defer the readjustment—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Dubé:** Perhaps the hon. member would like a drink of water? He would then be less disruptive.

**An hon. member:** Give him something to drink!

**Mr. Dubé:** As I was saying, it would be appropriate to await the outcome of this referendum before making changes.

Personally, as member for Lévis, I would like to point out another reason why I think it should be deferred. Basically, to keep changing the electoral map all the time is counterproductive in terms of fostering a sense of belonging within a region or a community.

(1730)

Some countries tend to keep the same electoral boundaries, despite shifts in population. This is done in France and other countries as well. There is evidence that it provides a certain stability and allows local communities to strengthen their feelings of solidarity and work more effectively to promote their economies.

We should not make changes as a matter of course, every other election. We live under a federal system, which means federal elections, usually every four years, and provincial elections as well. Generally speaking the provinces adjust their electoral boundaries as well, before every other election, as in Quebec. Unfortunately, there may be a lag, so that some voters, especially in the urban ridings I am familiar with, do not know to which riding they belong. In some cases, they do not even know their members. That may be because the members are not always very efficient—I am referring to the past because there are more and more Bloc members in Quebec, and people know us and will get to know us even better, because we are going to be very active. Why do people have problems? Because things change so often.

In terms of electoral boundaries, we have the territory covered by federal ridings and the territory covered by provincial ridings. Administratively speaking, voters want to identify with a territory. And what happens? Administratively speaking, although this may not be directly relevant to today's subject, the individual needs to identify with a given area. That is very important. It is very important for the individual to know to which area he belongs.

In the riding of Lévis, we have the Lévis Regional County Municipality, the territory covered by the provincial riding, school boards and LCSC areas. Provincial departments usually provide maps indicating which areas are covered by various services. If we add to all that the areas covered by federal services, by all the departments, the local employment centre and the rest, we could look at all the departments, and we would find as many ways to divide the area as there are departments.

Furthermore, there are a substantial number of federal government agencies and Crown corporations which also have their own areas. Imagine an individual trying to cope with these constant changes! People can get very confused—

[*English*]

**An hon. member:** There is a problem with the hon. member's microphone.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Dubé:** I will not start all over, Mr. Speaker.

Briefly, this is a very important issue. We have a federal electoral map, a provincial electoral map, and there are various what I would call administrative maps provided by provincial and federal departments.

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**Mr. Bellemare:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Since the microphone used by the hon. member for Lévis was turned off, we missed part of his speech. I wonder whether he could repeat the missing part.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** This is not a point of order as such. The hon. member has no text, so I think we will have to rely on *Hansard*.

**Mr. Dubé:** Mr. Speaker, at least the hon. member for Carleton—Gloucester will be able to read my speech tomorrow in *Hansard*, and I appreciate his interest. Speaking in the House is interesting when there are members who are interested in what one says, so I commend them for that.

(1735)

Nevertheless, in the two minutes I have left, I do not want to appear to be opposed to change. On the contrary, those who know me in my community find that I am usually someone who identifies with change and who agrees with change. But I think that the commissions should consider two changes. The first change, which seeks a certain fairness in the number of electors represented per riding, is laudable. It is right in a democracy, but I was just talking about the disadvantages it causes when there are too many changes.

Some countries have a system of proportional representation. I think this is something to consider. I looked at what the latest commission dealing with it had to say and it did not look into it much. Major reports have been written and we could review them.

There is another change, Mr. Speaker, and I think it is the most important one we should make here in Canada or in any democracy, namely financing of political parties. It would be a better way to strengthen and improve democracy than to change electoral maps left and right, I think.

In 1977, Quebec passed Bill 2, as a result of which political parties are financed by individuals and not by corporations, unions, companies and businesses. What has this achieved? It has eliminated a lot of—in politics, often perception is what counts. Since then, people feel that their government is less subject to undue pressure from business. I think that this is an improvement that the people in the Reform Party would also want to support. It would improve election practices, improve government management and finally free the members elected from the various ridings from the pressures to which they may be subject on the basis of party financing.

I think that it would be tremendous progress and I still do not understand why, although people dealt with it as part of that royal commission on electoral reform and party financing. Although the general public was heard on this subject and agreed with this reform, it got nowhere.

If I have one suggestion to make, and I conclude with that, we really should look into the financing of political parties by the people.

*[English]*

**Mr. Fred Mifflin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to rise to speak on second reading of Bill C-18, an act to suspend the operation of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act and refer it to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

I do not want to engage myself in a certain tone of debate which talks about issues that are not really pertinent to the act or to the substance of the issue because of the limited time and because it is not my style to engage in that kind of debate.

I want to have a look at why I am supporting the bill. I am going to restrict it to my riding of Bonavista—Trinity—Conception to try to give all sides of the House an indication of how it is viewed by my constituents. I have received many phone calls, and quite frankly the constituents who have called me are dumbfounded. That is the best word to describe them. They are dumbfounded by what is going on.

Let us look at the chronology from their viewpoint. There was a comment made in the House that I will correct. The last change did not take place in 1980. It took place in 1988. As I was entering politics the change was made, and let me say what it did to my riding. The name of the riding of Bonavista—Trinity—Conception has been around for a long time. It describes and rightly so the three bays on the east coast of Newfoundland: Bonavista Bay, Trinity Bay and Conception Bay. Before the present boundaries were set the southern part of my riding took in the northern half of Conception Bay, almost a straight line down through the bay. The previous boundary took in the northern part of Conception Bay and all of Trinity Bay but only the southern part of Bonavista Bay, not including the well-known Terra Nova Park.

(1740)

After the last census and the study of the commission that we are now trying to put on hold it was argued, and rightly so, that the riding of Bonavista—Trinity—Conception should include all of Bonavista Bay because there was a similarity with communities with respect to issuing fishing licences and the consideration of the community of interest, geographical reasons and similarly aligned issues.

It was argued that all of Bonavista Bay should be included. It was also argued that for the southern part of the previous boundary certain communities—I think there were seven of them including Brigus, Collier's, Whitbourne, Georgetown and Markland—should not be included because they were closely related to St. John's and had more of an urban interest. Their community of alignment was with the riding of St. John's East.

The third major reason was that Bonavista—Trinity—Conception as it was then comprised pre-1988 only had a population of around 75,000 or 76,000 whereas Gander—Grand Falls or Gander—Twillingate as it was then called had more than Bonavista—Trinity—Conception. It was felt that including the upper half of the northern half of Bonavista Bay would balance it more reasonably with other ridings in Newfoundland.

Considerable debate took place and the changes were eventually made. My constituents understood all the rationale that was used. After only one election the same rationale that was used to result in the present boundaries is being applied to revert to the old boundaries, except the rationale is used in reverse. It is said that the alignment of the northern part of Bonavista Bay is not in with the southern part of Bonavista Bay and the five or six communities that had an alignment more with the urban thinking of St. John's East really should belong to the district of Port de Grave because that really should belong to Bonavista—Trinity—Conception.

This is very difficult to understand for constituents who are only now getting used to a change that was made six years ago. Now they are being told that within two months they have to appear in four different locations in the riding either to agree or disagree, and the ones who disagree have to give some rationale why they disagree. That is very hard to understand.

What is also very hard to understand is that the population of Newfoundland from 1981 to 1991 had an increase of 793 people in 10 years. For this we are to realign what was realigned before, just take the rationale and use it in reverse. We will have 36 hearings in Atlantic Canada for 32 seats. That is about one per seat, except in Newfoundland where we have seven seats and there we will be 15 hearings. I am not sure what rationale was used there. I would not want to speculate for the members of the House.

The point I am making is that the changes that were made in 1987-88 were quite acceptable. The total population of the riding has not changed. The population of centres in the riding has not changed. People have not realigned themselves to my knowledge, so that has not changed. Why all of a sudden do three commissioners draw lines and find some rationale for those lines? I do not understand it.

(1745)

What is more important is my constituents. Not only do they not understand it and have difficulties with it, but they are saying to me: "You are going up to preach restraint, you are going up to lower the deficit, you are going up to balance the budget. How can you possibly, apart from the ridiculousness and the timing of this measure, support it from the viewpoint of expenditure?"

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I come up failing, Mr. Speaker. I cannot answer their questions.

Not an old but a wise mentor of mine once told me: "You know, Fred, being in politics is very simple; if you can't explain it, you really should not be doing it."

Well, I cannot explain this, Mr. Speaker, and therefore I am not so sure we should be doing it. Because of that, I am a very strong supporter of this bill to delay this ludicrous action that is taking place, so we can refer it to a committee, study it and come up with some reasonable recommendations.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Before resuming debate I will take a moment to make a comment to an earlier intervention by the member for Bonavista—Trinity—Conception on a point of order concerning relevance.

Some of his colleagues who shall remain unnamed from his great province would be the masters I might say of making a discourse on how it might be relevant. But it always amazes me in the short five years that I have been here that members always are able to make a relevant point to the motion or the bill being debated, and certainly I appreciate the member's participation in today's debate and his relevance to the subject matter.

**Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest):** Mr. Speaker, I will try to find a germ of relevance in my representation as well.

I have listened with a great deal of interest to this debate today. We are talking about closure, redistribution and political interference or non-political interference in the political process in Canada. That is one of the things that we can treasure.

When we look at other countries in the world and reflect on the tragedy that happened in Mexico yesterday, we think of the very real and very great political discourse that goes on in the country. We see our colleagues from the Bloc who are here and while we are at completely different poles we are able to discuss these things rationally and without fear of personal harm. That is something we really need to treasure in our country and to hold very dear. I guess that is one of the reasons that I wanted to speak to this motion.

When this bill was first introduced I really did not feel all that strongly about it. My riding of Edmonton Southwest is affected very little. We lose a little bit to the northwest but as members would know, Edmonton Northwest is represented by my colleague who shares the same last name. So we do not win or lose on that one. In the south we lose a little bit and we gain a little bit so that the effect on our constituency is not all that much.

What we do have is a sense of fairness that when we get into a political debate or into an election here in Canada most of us do not have to go to bed at night thinking that there has been any gerrymandering going on with our electoral boundaries. This is something that I think is particularly important.

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In the last election I was running as a rookie. The people from Elections Canada who were looking after things were all appointed by the Conservative government that preceded this government. I must compliment all of the people that I was associated with at Elections Canada. They were impartial and fair to everyone. In particular, I would use this occasion to compliment our returning officer, Patricia Collins, who went out of her way to be fair to me.

When we as a political institution start to change the rules that are established, whether we like them or not, we are treading on fairly thin ice. That is the reason that I am standing to speak against this motion today. If we do not like the rules then we have the privilege of changing them any time we want. However, there is no reason to suggest that the electoral boundary change cannot go forward as it would normally have done.

(1750)

I am not in favour of changing the number of seats in the House. It could have been frozen at substantially less years ago. However the very people who are now making the case for freezing the number of seats, during the Charlottetown accord when the number of seats in this House were going to grow amazingly, not one word was raised against it. Different times make different priorities.

When I thought I wanted to speak to this and the new wrinkle of closure was added to the soup that an earlier colleague described, I thought why not phone the Library of Parliament and ask them to send over a few topic headings under the term "closure" and then I would glean from that a few examples of members' opposite when they were in opposition railing against the government of the day on the issue of closure.

There are three pages. So we just grabbed one to use as an example. Then I thought I had better be a little careful because I am sure that when members opposite were railing against closure when they were in opposition they had no idea that these words would be coming back at them in such a short time.

However, I must use one example and this is from *Hansard*, May 29, 1991, the hon. member representing Ottawa—Vanier:

Since I began my remarks on the government's heavy-handed motion to reinstate certain bills, for which it could not receive unanimous consent because they are indeed not very good bills, a new element has been introduced into the debate—closure. It is now using its majority, the tyranny of the majority, to impose upon the rest of us its will.

That is far from being democratic.

Therefore, I am a little nervous about introducing this because I know that if we are as successful as we hope to be, we will be sitting on the other side of the House.

**An hon. member:** Not to worry about it.

**Mr. McClelland:** Not to worry about it? Fine, not to worry about it.

**An hon. member:** Do not worry about it.

**Mr. McClelland:** No, you worry about it. That is right.

Lo and behold I am having my corn flakes this morning knowing that I am going to speak to this today and from today's *Globe and Mail* I would recommend to hon. members and to those of you watching these proceedings on television a very worthwhile article called "Debasing the Franchise". This is part one of three articles. I recommend it to everyone so they can catch a bit of the flavour and a bit of the history of just what we are talking about here. It is in today's *Globe and Mail* and there will be another article tomorrow and then the next day. If I may I will read just a small bit from today's *Globe and Mail*. It has to do with representation by population and distribution.

In any event in 1947 they had a pretty good idea that what they were going to do was base the number of seats by the representative population that Canada had and then divide that by the number of provinces and presto, you have the number of seats. As one province increases they get more seats and as another province decreases it gets less seats, except in the case of Prince Edward Island which was guaranteed four seats. That seemed like a pretty good idea at the time but it did not last.

I would like to suggest a way out of this muddle. I would suggest that we have a limit on the number of seats. There certainly will not be any problem from this side of the House in saying that we should not be increasing the number of seats in the House of Commons. Let us freeze it at 295. Let us have a strict representation by population in the House. Every province will be represented strictly in its proportionate number of seats by its population with no floors; no floors for Quebec and no floors for Prince Edward Island. Then how do we go about representing the regions or the provinces in Canada?

(1755)

Let us have a Senate that represents the provinces. Let us have a triple-E Senate. That will get us out of this mess. We can have a House of Commons that will be strictly representation by population. That is magic, is it not? Then we have a Senate that represents the provinces.

A member opposite said they had not heard of this before. There may even be a few people out there in television land who

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have not heard of this before. It is called a triple-E Senate. Through representation by population in the House and a triple-E Senate in the other House, we achieve what we want to achieve.

We achieve representation of all provinces equally in Canada and we achieve representation by population in this House without it growing forever. There, I submit most humbly, is my answer to the dilemma that our honourable House faces. How do we go about achieving it? It is simple.

Let us get on with it now. We know how to achieve it. We need to do something about the Senate. We are all in basic agreement with that. We will get representation by population in this House and we can get a triple-E Senate in the other House and we can all go home happy.

**Mr. Andy Mitchell (Parry Sound—Muskoka):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of Bill C-18 because I believe the present system is detrimental both in general terms to Canadians as a whole and certainly detrimental in specific terms for northern Ontario and for the riding of Parry Sound—Muskoka which I represent.

I do not believe that the present system fulfils the mandate that it was given. I would like to read from the terms of reference. It says that “in fixing the electoral district boundaries, they must take into consideration the community of interest or community of identity in or refer to historical patterns of an electoral district and a manageable geographic size for districts in sparsely populated rural or northern regions”.

The present system does none of these things. It was simply a mathematical exercise and then a drawing of lines on a map. This does not serve the interests of Canadian people and it certainly does not serve the interests of people in northern Ontario.

I cannot believe that the Reform Party is not supporting this bill. By not supporting this bill and by encouraging the present system, it is encouraging that we will have more members in this House. That is something that it has railed against time and time again.

It is certainly not something that I have heard from my constituents, that they want to expand government and have more government spending. The opportunity to take a second look at this is probably pretty good idea.

I certainly do not think it makes any sense to change approximately 80 per cent of the electoral boundaries that we have in this redistribution process. It seems like we are throwing the baby out with the bathwater. It is far too extensive. It is costing far too much money and causing far too much disruption.

We need to develop a new system that has public input at a far earlier point. The present system, having redrawn all the boundaries and coming out with a *fait accompli* and then asking the

public to comment on it, is not the appropriate way of doing it. We need to study it. We need a system that is going to allow the public to have input at a much earlier stage.

(1800)

I certainly think that history speaks to the problem. The hon. member who spoke before seemed to think that we had been doing okay with the present system and asked why we were trying to change it. I would like to read from John Courtney's book *Parliamentary Representation* wherein he talked about the electoral system in the most recent history:

Since 1964 Parliament has amended the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act seven times; suspended one redistribution in mid-stream; ignored, then replaced, another at the completion of its work; and accepted three different formulae (a different one for each redistribution) for determining the number of seats to be awarded the provinces and the territories. Five starts at electoral redistribution in little more than 20 years suggests that the process has yet to win the measure of support and confidence of parliamentarians needed to ensure its long-term institutional independence.

With all those changes and with all the difficulties that we have had with electoral redistribution in the last 30 years, I do not think support of the present system is appropriate. Indeed we need to go back to the drawing board and look at a better way of doing things.

In addition to the national concerns that I have addressed, I have some very specific concerns as redistribution relates to my area of the country, northern Ontario. It will result in the elimination of two seats in northern Ontario. We have little enough representation as it is now with only 12 seats, but this plan would reduce us to 10 seats. I believe this is unfair. We are a rural area in northern Ontario. We need strong representation. I cannot support a particular system that will see our representation reduced by two.

As the hon. member from the riding of Algoma spoke earlier he described an electoral system that would result in his riding going from Manitoulin Island all the way north to James Bay. It is totally impractical that a member of Parliament could be expected to cover such a large geographic area. The present system that simply divides population on a map and draws lines is totally inappropriate. The plan to reduce northern Ontario down to 10 ridings takes away the collective voice we have in northern Ontario. The system is definitely flawed and needs to be changed.

Then we get to my own particular riding of Parry Sound—Muskoka. It is an area that under this redistribution would be split absolutely in two, with the northern half of my riding going in one direction and the southern half of my riding going in a different direction.

This certainly does not fulfil the mandate of the electoral commission which was to take into account historical, social and economic realities of the situation. The riding of Parry Sound—Muskoka has existed for 60 years, and in one fell swoop of a pen on a map there is a proposal to destroy it and to split it in two. I cannot accept that.



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There are the social concerns. We in Parry Sound—Muskoka have developed into a unique community of communities, one that has a cohesiveness of interests, and again a stroke of a pen on a map is going to take that away.

The third area they were supposed to take into account was economics. We have a shared economy in Parry Sound—Muskoka. We have the major industry of tourism which we share. We share the same major transportation links of Highway 11 and Highway 69. We share the same character of rural Ontario. Again these social considerations under the current system will simply be thrown out the window as a result of the stroke of a pen on a map.

I do not believe the system serves the interest of Canadians. I know it does not serve the interest of northern Ontarians. I certainly know it does not serve the interest of my constituents from Parry Sound—Muskoka. I support the bill so that we can go back to take a look at the system and redesign it.

(1805)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Ghislain Lebel (Chambly):** Mr. Speaker, the riding of Chambly I represent has an area of 384 square kilometres. In the last election, it had 76,204 voters; today, that number is down to 76,203, since I spend most of my time here. It was and still is a mostly urban riding that straddles the Richelieu River from Beloeil—Saint-Hilaire to Chambly, including Saint-Bruno, a beautiful city we are proud of.

In my riding, the proposed electoral boundaries readjustment would add 14 small, rather rural municipalities and remove a large one, Saint-Bruno, that would be integrated into the riding of Saint-Hubert. The riding would gain 14 municipalities, and would extend almost as far as Granby in the Eastern Townships.

The problem is, first of all, there is no rush. We can take the time to debate these issues and to understand what is behind the changes proposed by the elections commission.

In my case, I go from 76,200 voters to a new riding with 110,000 voters. But my neighbour from whom I took 14 municipalities goes from a riding of 110,000 voters to one with about 76,000 voters. We merely exchange voters without gaining anything at the administrative level. On the contrary, I think we stand to lose.

What will it be like for the member representing that riding the day after the new electoral map comes into effect? In my riding, which has an area of only 384 square kilometres, all my predecessors had their offices in the middle of the riding to avoid long-distance charges. But after readjustment, the member for the new riding will need at least two offices and will be

practically unable to make calls without incurring high long-distance charges.

Some would reply, “The government pays for that”. Yes, when the member initiates the call, but when it is the voters who call, they complain that they cannot reach their member. They can reach him but only if they pay charges that can be quite high depending on their complaints. If only for that reason, I think it is a bad idea.

Furthermore, what is proposed does not take into account, I think, the communities’ desire to live together because they are used to living together. Over the years, places like Saint-Bruno, Saint-Hilaire, Beloeil, Chambly—the smallest communities have a population of 15,000 or 16,000, while the largest have between 30,000 and 35,000 residents—have developed trade links as well as cultural and other exchanges involving volunteers, regional county municipalities, etc. These municipalities have learned to live together and have become very good at it. And just for the sake of it, we are now going to change riding boundaries to no one’s benefit.

As I said earlier, my constituency will increase to 110,000 voters but that of my neighbour will go down to 76,000. What did we gain from all this? I would have understood how, if my neighbour had encroached on someone else and so on, we would have fiddled with the ridings to distribute the population more or less equally among the ridings, but that is not the case.

(1810)

So I have some trouble understanding why the electoral commission is so eager to impose on us new boundaries that do not reflect local realities and the desire of people to live together, as in the riding I represent; that said, of course, with respect for the people who will join our riding. Shifting riding boundaries around just for the fun of it was not the main purpose of the electoral commission.

As for Quebec, we cannot talk about redistribution without talking about Quebec and its future. This morning, a poll published in the Eastern Townships, on which the riding of Chambly abuts, reports that the idea of sovereignty is supported by a strong majority in the Eastern Townships; the survey says 53 per cent.

At the beginning of my speech, I told you that the house was not on fire and I think that the Liberal Party of Canada has understood that and said to itself: “Better not go ahead too quickly with those changes. Quebec will probably separate in a year or a year and a half, so we would have done all this boundary adjustment for nothing. Better soft-pedal it, if not stop it, and we will see later”. I think that is wise on the part of the government. I commend it for that and I thank it for saving the taxpayers in my riding and all Canadians a fairly considerable amount of money.

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This morning, we voted against a motion. I hope that you will understand what we on this side of the House were against was the rather high-handed way in which they decided to end this debate. Certain parliamentary principles are dear to us, whether we are independentists or angry federalists, and wanting to cut off discussion and debate on a subject like redistribution which is important for many people is something that my party and I could not support, you understand, and that is why we voted against it. But tonight, for the reasons I explained to you, of course we will support the motion of the party in power, which is a motion from a party that understands things, which sees the obvious and knows that the Canadian federation as it now exists probably does not have much longer to live.

Based on the poll I have here, which is encouraging for my political option, we realize that the strongest bastions of federalism in the Eastern Townships have been shattered like tooth-picks, so that is encouraging for my party and me.

With that, I tell you that I will vote on second reading of this Bill C-18 for extending the mandate, that is for postponement, like my colleagues who spoke before me.

[*English*]

**Mr. John Bryden (Hamilton—Wentworth):** Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure to take part in this debate. I found it very interesting. All the various parties contributed to it. I would like to take it though in a slightly different direction, in a media direction that reflects my background somewhat.

Let me first describe my riding very briefly. My riding is Hamilton—Wentworth. It is a large, rural, suburban and urban riding that surrounds Hamilton. It follows the old historic lines of Wentworth county. It has a basic shape, a community centre and a community of interest going back well over 100 years.

(1815)

There is one corner of my riding, the far southeast corner, Binbrook. It is a village with some farms immediately around it. After the writ was dropped I did a door to door campaign in Binbrook, about five days into the election. I was surprised to discover as I went from door to door that many people did not know who the candidates were. They did not know my name. They did not know the name of the Reform Party candidate. They did not know the name of the Conservative candidate.

I was quite surprised by this. I reflected upon it and asked questions. I discovered that the problem in this one small corner of my riding was that they were not served by a weekly newspaper. They are on the far edge of the circulation of the major daily newspaper which is the *Hamilton Spectator* which is in the centre of downtown Hamilton.

Again they are on the fringe of radio coverage. Finally, their basic interest was directed not toward Hamilton but directed toward another community outside of my riding, Stoney Creek and down toward the peninsula.

I realized then how absolutely essential it is for a politician to have a media which serves him because no matter what we do in this House or what we do in our lives for that matter, we have to reach the public. The public has to know what we do, whether it is good or bad, and I certainly hope that if it is good it does know. So the media is very important.

The rest of my riding is very well served. There are three weekly newspapers in various blocks of the suburban and urban portion. Of course the majority of the riding receives the *Hamilton Spectator* and there are two AM radio stations and some FM stations as well. I am very well covered as far as the ability of the media to follow my actions.

This redistribution however changes this picture entirely and it is a great problem. What has happened to my riding under the new redistribution proposal has taken out the urban component. As my riding is presently constituted I have about 30,000 people in Hamilton Mountain. They are completely eliminated. Instead what I have are two new blocks added, one a rural block next to Cambridge and another block between Cambridge and Brantford. To be more precise the one block is near Guelph.

Let me just visualize it for you, Mr. Speaker. You have Hamilton, Guelph, Cambridge and Brantford and the new rural blocks are in between those two areas.

These new blocks would be a great problem for me if this redistribution were to go ahead because they do not receive the *Hamilton Spectator*, they do not have weekly newspapers that serve them in the same way as my immediate community newspapers and they are out of range of the television and radio stations that are based in Hamilton.

Instead they turn to other communities. Naturally being rural communities they look to their nearest urban centre. So the block called Puslinch looks to Guelph. The block called north Dumfries looks to Cambridge and the block I would call south Dumfries looks to Brantford.

I am sure that you can see, Mr. Speaker, the problem that is presented here. If I say something in this House that is of some importance my chances of getting reported not only in the community and daily newspapers centred on Hamilton, but also in the *Cambridge Reporter*, the *Guelph Mercury* and the *Brantford Expositor* are very difficult.

In fact, those three newspapers that serve the rural areas that we are talking about only form a very small portion of the circulation of those newspapers. There is a great difficulty for me to get any kind of message out into these rural areas by the news media.

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It is the same with the radio stations. These three rural areas that I would get in redistribution do not pick up the radio stations centred on Hamilton which would have the greatest interest in what I do. They instead are served by radio stations in Brantford, Cambridge and in these other areas.

Again the difficulty and the reality of the media is if they are going to do a news story on someone and that someone is of importance to perhaps only 5 per cent of their listeners the chances of them actually doing a news story is very limited.

(1820)

That is the dilemma. The chances of people hearing what I do in these two rural blocks is very, very limited.

There is another side to the coin which is equally difficult. I have a responsibility as an MP to serve the people in my riding, and I have to serve those people community by community. At present I can follow what happens in my community by again turning to the local media. I have three community newspapers, I have the major daily paper and I also have the television station and radio.

The difficulty is that I have to now follow three more communities through the media. That means I would have to pay attention to these three other newspapers, I would have to pay attention to the radio stations and I would have to follow the local governments in three additional cities and municipalities.

I just do not think it is possible for one MP to cover that large a territory successfully, to be up on the news and be up on what concerns people over that vast area. Consequently I find that the kind of redistribution I am looking at is very flawed.

It is a question in my mind of philosophy. The reason we have to bring in a bill like Bill C-18 is not to interfere with a body outside of government that has been appointed to do a particular task. Our job as legislators is to give them the philosophy to operate. We have to define for them when they make this redistribution what they are doing and why they are doing it. It would appear from what I see now that in the past they have looked at the numbers purely and they have not given due attention to the question of community of interest, how our information comes from the politician to the people and how the politician gets the information from the people.

I would strongly support the intent of this bill because I think we are in the business here in this 35th Parliament of looking at reform of institutions in the sense of how better we can serve the people of Canada and our constituents. I think if we re-examine the philosophy of redistribution we may indeed find that numbers are not the last word of this issue, that it is how best the MP can represent perhaps a geographic entity.

Some of my colleagues have mentioned that in northern Ontario, for example, the numbers are sparse but the community of interest is based on history and geography. If you do it straight by numbers of course you are going to skew our historic responsibility to the people of Canada whom we serve regionally.

In concluding, I think this is a very fine move by this government. I really do wish that the members of both parties, particularly the Reform Party, would reconsider because I think this is the kind of reform that all of us in this House wish to see.

**Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to Bill C-18. My riding of Kootenay West—Revelstoke is very adversely affected by the proposed boundaries adjustment act. The riding is currently made up of two specific geographic areas which have much in common. Virtually all of my riding is located in a valley setting on or near one of three waterways.

There are some notable exceptions in this for mountainous communities such as Rossland and Warfield. The entire riding is involved in forestry, hydroelectric power generation and tourism. The Columbia River treaty affects all communities on or near the river from Trail in the south of the riding to Revelstoke in the north.

Many people travel between towns for work and recreational purposes. In the interests of economy we have learned how to share. For example, in 1996 Trail and Castlegar are jointly hosting the British Columbia Summer Games. Either community is too small to host this by itself, but by working together the 1996 games should be a spectacular success.

In short, we are a riding consisting of commonality of both geography and concerns. The proposal under the current Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act effectively dismantles this riding that has so much in common.

The West Kootenay portion of the riding is split down the middle with Trail and surrounding communities being placed in a riding that would find its centre in the Okanagan, 200 miles to the west, an area that has nothing in common with its new addition. The rest of the West Kootenays would find itself in a riding with its centre 200 miles to the east, again with little in common with its new addition.

(1825)

Revelstoke would find itself in a new riding made up of parts of the north Okanagan where it would likely centre. This riding would then proceed east past Revelstoke and the Rogers Pass, all the way to the Alberta border and include the northern portion of the former Kootenay East. Kootenay East would have to give up this portion of its old riding to make up for receiving the chunk that came from Kootenay West which no one asked for. Rev-

*Government Orders*

elstoke has little in common with any of these geographic areas and would be poorly served by the change.

With these changes Kootenay West—Revelstoke would cease to exist and, yes, I would be an MP without a riding. Given all these problems for the riding and faced with the loss of my own seat, one might ask why I am not supporting the motion by the government. Indeed many have asked that very question.

The reason is as follows. In the early stages of the drafting of the bill the government was looking for consent from all parties. Aside from the problems created for individual ridings like Kootenay West—Revelstoke, there were two main areas of concern regarding the current boundary readjustment. One of these is the fact that it creates six new ridings in Canada, two of which are in B.C. The B.C. ridings would most likely end up Reform ridings, but we still oppose this because we feel the last thing Canadians want or need is more MPs in Ottawa.

Each MP adds about half a million dollars in direct costs plus untold costs for offices, printing services and supplies, not to mention the cost of refurbishing the House which has no additional capacity at this time. A condition that would have been necessary for us to support the bill would have been an assurance that no new seats would have been added to any future boundary adjustments. We did not get this assurance.

Another condition we would have required is more public input and control. One of the problems with the current system is that it does not consult the public until the plan is complete, the maps are drawn and it is almost a done deal. The government was not prepared to offer any assurances on this concern either.

Given that we believed these requests were reasonable and in the public's best interest, we had to consider that the government had a hidden agenda. The hidden agenda we suspected was a great increase in the number of seats and the removal of public input into the process.

Following the passage of the bill to suspend redistribution and disband existing provincial boundary commissions, it is expected the government will make a motion to assess continual increase in the number of members of Parliament and to review the selection methods of the commission members, public involvement and the commission's powers.

This assessment will be carried out by a committee of MPs on which the Liberal government would have an absolute majority. In actual fact the government by virtue of its majority can operate in a manner of dictatorship for the next five years. The invoking of closure which the Liberals have strongly opposed in the past is the most recent example of business in the usual style of the former government.

While we have heard of one famous name from the past receiving a dollar a year to advise the Liberals, we cannot help but wonder if Brian Mulroney was also in need of a dollar.

The current process has now reached a point at which public input is heard. As devastating as the current proposed changes are for my riding, I would prefer to deal with it through the public hearing process than take a chance on the government accepting or even increasing the number of seats in Parliament or removing the public from the process.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** It being 6.29 p.m., pursuant to order made Wednesday, March 23, 1994 in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 78(3) it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill now before the House.

(1830)

The question is on the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** All those in favour of the amendment will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And more than five members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Call in the members.

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negatived on the following division:)

*(Division No. 24)*

**YEAS**

Members

Althouse	Brown (Calgary Southeast)
Chatters	Cummins
Duncan	Forseth
Frazer	Gilmour
Gouk	Grey (Beaver River)
Hanrahan	Harper (Calgary West)
Harper (Simcoe Centre)	Hayes
Hermanson	Hill (Macleod)
Johnston	McClelland (Edmonton Southwest)
Meredith	Mills (Red Deer)
Ramsay	Ringma
Schmidt	Scott (Skeena)
Silye	Speaker
Taylor—27	

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## NAYS

## Members

Adams	Alcock
Allmand	Anawak
Arseneault	Assadourian
Augustine	Baker
Bakopanos	Barnes
Beaumier	Bellemare
Berger	Bergeron
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)	Bertrand
Bethel	Bevilacqua
Bhaduria	Bodnar
Bonin	Boudria
Brien	Brown (Oakville—Milton)
Brushett	Bryden
Bélisle	Calder
Campbell	Cannis
Catterall	Chamberlain
Chrétien (Frontenac)	Clancy
Cohen	Collins
Cowling	Crawford
Crête	Culbert
Daviault	Dhaliwal
Dingwall	Dromisky
Dubé	Duceppe
Duhamel	Easter
English	Fewchuk
Finestone	Finlay
Fontana	Fry
Gaffney	Gagliano
Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)	Galloway
Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier)	Gauthier (Roberval)
Gerrard	Godfrey
Goodale	Gray (Windsor West)
Guarnieri	Guay
Harb	Harper (Churchill)
Harvard	Hickey
Hubbard	Ianno
Ifody	Irwin
Jackson	Jacob
Keys	Kirkby
Knutson	Kraft Sloan
Lalonde	Landry
Langlois	Laurin
Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Paul)	Lebel
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)	Leblanc (Longueuil)
Lee	Loubier
MacAulay	MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys)
Malhi	Maloney
Marleau	Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Massé	McCormick
McKinnon	McTeague
McWhinney	Mercier
Mifflin	Milliken
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)	Mitchell
Murphy	Murray
Nault	Nunez
O'Reilly	Ouellet
Pagtakhan	Paré
Payne	Peters
Peterson	Phinney
Pickard (Essex—Kent)	Pillitteri
Pomerleau	Proud
Péloquin	Reed
Regan	Richardson
Rideout	Ringuette—Maltais
Robichaud	Rompkey
Scott (Fredericton—York Sunbury)	Serré
Shepherd	Sheridan
Simmons	Skoke
Speller	St. Denis
Steckle	Stewart (Brant)
Stewart (Northumberland)	Szabo
Telegdi	Terrana
Thalheimer	Tobin
Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)	Ur
Vanclief	Verran
Volpe	Walker
Whelan	Wood
Zed—155	

## PAIRED MEMBERS

## Members

Anderson	Asselin
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)	Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Bachand	Bellehumeur
Bernier (Beauce)	Bouchard
Canuel	Caron
Cauchon	Chan
Collenette	Comuzzi
Copps	Dalphond—Guiral
DeVillers	Debien
Deshaies	Discepola
Dumas	Dupuy
Eggleton	Fillion
Flis	Gagnon (Québec)
Godin	Graham
Guimond	Hopkins
Lastewka	Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)
Lefebvre	Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)
Lincoln	Loney
MacLaren (Etobicoke North)	Manley
Marchand	Marchi
McGuire	McLellan (Edmonton Northwest)
Mercier	Minna
Ménard	O'Brien
Parrish	Patry
Picard (Drummond)	Plamondon
St-Laurent	Torsney
Tremblay (Rosemont)	Valeri
Venne	Wells
Young	de Savoye

(1855)

**The Speaker:** I declare the the amendment lost.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gagliano:** Mr. Speaker, I believe that you will obtain unanimous consent to have the result of the vote just taken applied in reverse to the main motion.

**The Speaker:** Does the House agree?**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:

(Division No. 25)

## YEAS

## Members

Adams	Alcock
Allmand	Anawak
Arseneault	Assadourian
Augustine	Baker
Bakopanos	Barnes
Beaumier	Bellemare
Berger	Bergeron
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)	Bertrand
Bethel	Bevilacqua
Bhaduria	Bodnar
Bonin	Boudria
Brien	Brown (Oakville—Milton)
Brushett	Bryden
Bélisle	Calder
Campbell	Cannis
Catterall	Chamberlain
Chrétien (Frontenac)	Clancy
Cohen	Collins
Cowling	Crawford
Crête	Culbert
Daviault	Dhaliwal
Dingwall	Dromisky
Dubé	Duceppe
Duhamel	Easter

English  
 Finestone  
 Fontana  
 Gaffney  
 Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)  
 Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier)  
 Gerrard  
 Goodale  
 Guarnieri  
 Harb  
 Harvard  
 Hubbard  
 Iftody  
 Jackson  
 Keyes  
 Knutson  
 Lalonde  
 Langlois  
 Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Paul)  
 LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)  
 Lee  
 MacAulay  
 Malhi  
 Marleau  
 Massé  
 McKinnon  
 McWhinney  
 Mifflin  
 Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)  
 Murphy  
 Nault  
 O'Reilly  
 Pagtakhan  
 Payne  
 Peterson  
 Pickard (Essex—Kent)  
 Pomerleau  
 Péloquin  
 Regan  
 Rideout  
 Robichaud  
 Scott (Fredericton—York Sunbury)  
 Shepherd  
 Simmons  
 Speller  
 Steckle  
 Stewart (Northumberland)  
 Telegdi  
 Thalheimer  
 Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)  
 Vanclief  
 Volpe  
 Whelan  
 Zed—155

Fewchuk  
 Finlay  
 Fry  
 Gagliano  
 Gallaway  
 Gauthier (Roberval)  
 Godfrey  
 Gray (Windsor West)  
 Guay  
 Harper (Churchill)  
 Hickey  
 Ianno  
 Irwin  
 Jacob  
 Kirkby  
 Kraft Sloan  
 Landry  
 Laurin  
 Lebel  
 Leblanc (Longueuil)  
 Loubier  
 MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys)  
 Maloney  
 Martin (LaSalle—Énard)  
 McCormick  
 McTeague  
 Mercier  
 Milliken  
 Mitchell  
 Murray  
 Nunez  
 Ouellet  
 Paré  
 Peters  
 Phinney  
 Pillitteri  
 Proud  
 Reed  
 Richardson  
 Ringuette—Maltais  
 Rompkey  
 Serré  
 Sheridan  
 Skoke  
 St. Denis  
 Stewart (Brant)  
 Szabo  
 Terrana  
 Tobin  
 Ur  
 Verran  
 Walker  
 Wood

Althouse  
 Chatters  
 Duncan  
 Frazer  
 Gouk  
 Hanrahan  
 Harper (Simcoe Centre)  
 Hermanson  
 Johnston  
 Meredith  
 Ramsay  
 Schmidt  
 Silye  
 Taylor—27

Anderson  
 Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)  
 Bachand  
 Bernier (Beauce)  
 Canuel  
 Cauchon  
 Collette  
 Copps  
 DeVillers  
 Deshaies  
 Dumas  
 Eggleton  
 Flis  
 Godin  
 Guimond  
 Lastewka  
 Lefebvre  
 Lincoln  
 MacLaren (Etobicoke North)  
 Marchand  
 McGuire  
 Mercier  
 Ménard  
 Parrish  
 Picard (Drummond)  
 St-Laurent  
 Tremblay (Rosemont)  
 Venne  
 Young

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**NAYS**

Members  
 Brown (Calgary Southeast)  
 Cummins  
 Forseth  
 Gilmour  
 Grey (Beaver River)  
 Harper (Calgary West)  
 Hayes  
 Hill (Macleod)  
 McClelland (Edmonton Southwest)  
 Mills (Red Deer)  
 Ringma  
 Scott (Skeena)  
 Speaker

**PAIRED MEMBERS**

Members  
 Asselin  
 Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)  
 Bellehumeur  
 Bouchard  
 Caron  
 Chan  
 Comuzzi  
 Dalphond—Guiral  
 Debieen  
 Discepola  
 Dupuy  
 Fillion  
 Gagnon (Québec)  
 Graham  
 Hopkins  
 Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)  
 Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)  
 Loney  
 Manley  
 Marchi  
 McLellan (Edmonton Northwest)  
 Minna  
 O'Brien  
 Patry  
 Plamondon  
 Torsney  
 Valeri  
 Wells  
 de Savoye

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee.)

[*English*]

**The Speaker:** It being seven o'clock p.m., this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at ten o'clock a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7 p.m.)

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**ROYAL ASSENT**

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