

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.

Government Orders

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