

Government Orders

Mr. Morrison: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. My hon. colleague for Lethbridge has some very important remarks to make. Could we not have some Liberals in the House to listen to them?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I am sorry, the hon. member is well aware that we never refer to the presence or absence of anyone in the House. I am sure he will withdraw his comments.

Mr. Morrison: Madam Speaker, I do withdraw my pejorative comment. However, I would again request that we have quorum.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): The member has called for a quorum. I do not see one.

Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): We have quorum. Resuming debate.

Mr. Speaker (Lethbridge): Madam Speaker, I would like to speak to this amendment that is before us and as well to Bill C-69 and the recommendations that come from the Senate.

• (1250)

I want to say something about the process this bill has gone through between the fall of 1993, when this Parliament began, and today. One of the most disappointing things I have found about this Liberal government is it came to this assembly ill-prepared. This bill is another item that demonstrates the ill-prepared way in which they took on the responsibilities.

The Liberal Party spent 10 years in opposition. One of the basic functions and purposes of the loyal opposition is to be a government in waiting. That is the basic purpose, to prepare itself for government. The Liberals were to know what kind of a budget they would bring to Canadians. They were to know what kind of a social program they would bring to Canadians. They had to know what kind of a redistribution bill would be brought before this House of Commons in 1993.

When this government came here it was not prepared in any way. We spent one year with nothing but procrastination, with studies, with no answers to questions. It was not a government in waiting.

What did the Liberals do in opposition? What did they do on this side of the House? They are doing about the same thing today.

Mr. Volpe: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I realize we are all here to debate the truth so the public will be informed on everything. But I think it is important that when a member stands up he knows that of which he proposes to speak.

There is no way an opposition party under the old system could possibly have intervened in the system; it is an arm's length system—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): Please continue.

Mr. Speaker (Lethbridge): Madam Speaker, I appreciate your ruling that is not a point of order but a sensitivity of the hon. member to the irresponsibility that went on in this House for 10 years where the Liberal Party members sat on this side of the House and did nothing but play politics and attempt to get into the powerful position of being government. But they did not know why they really wanted to get into government, other than getting the perks, being ministers and having powers. Supposedly they were going to run the country with those terms of reference. There was no preparation at all.

Since coming to this House in the fall of 1993 I have observed what has gone on over and over again, whether the budget, the social policy, the health policy, which is delayed until this fall. The government still does not know what kind of a health policy Canadians are going to have or what kind of a—

Mrs. Terrana: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. We are here to discuss Bill C-69 and not the performance of one party or another.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): Resuming debate.

Mr. Speaker (Lethbridge): Madam Speaker, I am discussing the process relative to Bill C-69. I prefaced my remarks to that. My preface was that Bill C-69 is in a process that was ill conceived, that was based on a lack of preparation by this government, and was basically incompetent.

At this time we are faced with trying to design the ground rules by which a commission is going to establish the constituency boundaries across this nation. We are going to put them under a terrible time constraint to do a good, competent job.

There are a couple of other arguments with regard to Bill C-69. My colleague from Calgary Centre outlined very clearly to us a concern that we are going to expand the number of seats in this House from the current 295 to 301. The Reform Party has taken a very clear position, saying we are prepared to reduce the number of seats in this House, which is responsible. It is a response to the Canadian public at the present time, who recognize that we must be frugal and respond to their direction at this time. The Reform Party is prepared to do just that.

• (1255)

We have to ask a question, which relates to my first comments: Why does the government not do that? My colleagues have said very clearly in their debate that the government does not listen and has not listened to the Canadian people and what it is they want.