

Government Orders

I have serious concerns about my riding but I am willing to make presentations on behalf of the people of Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt regarding those concerns. I will not have that opportunity now and the people of Canada do not have the opportunity to do it either.

In closing, I would like to urge all members in every corner of the House to please consider once again what Canadians have asked us to do, to bring accountability back to the House of Commons and to let them be more involved in the democracy process. I want every member of the House consider that. I ask hon. members to support the amendments that are before us today.

Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain (Guelph—Wellington): Mr. Speaker, to my hon. colleague across the way, first he mentioned the fact that it is more costly. There is no issue here. The reality is if we proceed—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I wonder if I might seek clarification from the member? Is she on debate? There is no questions or comments period in the standing orders we are presently under. Is the member on debate?

Mrs. Chamberlain: Yes, I am, Mr. Speaker. Could I ask the Chair a question? When you say am I on debate, what exactly is it that you would like for me to do?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I do not want to put any restrictions on any member, but according to the standing orders of this debate at this time, each member who seeks the floor is recognized by the Chair and has 10 minutes to make his or her intervention.

I wondered if perhaps the member was seeking to ask a question of the member who last spoke. There is no questions or comments period following the interventions at this particular stage of debate. The hon. member for Guelph—Wellington.

Mrs. Chamberlain: Mr. Speaker, the member across the way said that this is a costly process, and this side of the House quite agrees with that. People in general and certainly in my riding of Guelph—Wellington have expressed deep concern at the cost of the process and how much will be gained.

● (1220)

The other issue that the member across the floor has talked about is the fact that this would create more government. For us to create more government at a time that people feel we should not be moving in that direction is not responsible.

I do not believe we are taking the position—I certainly am not—that we do not think people should be involved. People should be involved. People have been involved at the local level from riding to riding. Many people have talked to me on this issue and expressed concern. They wished that the government

would take a leadership role in deciding what should happen with this issue. We have attempted to do that.

I believe my role when I was elected was to be a leader, to show leadership and to make decisions supported by concrete facts, information building, public information being included in that communication process. I am comfortable with the direction the government is moving in.

The charge by my hon. colleague about Liberal stronghold areas being protected is not so. I cannot agree with that. That would not be the reason I would look at not supporting this amendment. The reality is that many members—I would put myself in this category—find themselves living outside the actual area that they represent. It seems odd to me that there would be decisions and directions moved in this manner.

Another colleague of ours finds part of his farm in one riding and his house in another. This does not seem reasonable. I hope the member across the way knows that some of the boundaries that were proposed are not credible. They do not make sense.

To have a situation in which we would have public input on every single area, 295 ridings or perhaps more—my colleague talks about maybe 300 or 304 ridings, I do not know where this process would end—is not a good thing at this time. The points of view are varied but in general there is wide support for the government.

I will speak on behalf of Guelph—Wellington and the information that I have received from my constituents. It is that this process, the way it was first initiated, was quite a hodge-podge. They are comfortable with us as a government saying no to this process in the manner that it has been proposed. They are concerned about cost and they are concerned about more government.

My colleague has indicated that is the question. That would be the result of the process we are embarked upon at this time. I would say this to members. From my point of view and from what I have been able to gather from public input, from talking to people, they are comfortable with this decision.

This is exactly what the Reform Party wants us to do, listen to our constituents and find out what they truly want us to do. In acting on that I am comfortable on this topic at this time.

● (1225)

[Translation]

Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides): Mr. Speaker, I am convinced I will not have to invite you to come and visit my riding since you must have been there already on skiing vacations. The riding of Laurentides has 43 municipalities and 110,000 voters. It is a huge riding but the new electoral map brings appalling cuts to this area. Without any reason, several municipalities will be taken from my riding and will become part of a neighbouring one.