

Government Orders

To illustrate this point I would like to mention something that was said by a government member earlier in this debate. That member claimed that Reformers were being inconsistent in wanting to amend Bill C-18 to alter the period of suspension to 12 months. Reform originally argued against the proposed 18 month suspension because it would have given the Liberal government an advantage in deciding when the election would be and in deciding whether the old boundaries or some new boundaries would apply during the next election.

In negotiations Reform took the position that either 24 months or 12 months was better than 18 because at least then it would be clear what was going to happen. Of course we prefer the 12 month suspension because at least the process could get restarted again and we have a chance that the non-partisan process would be completed before the next election.

All hon. members who value democracy should work to defeat Bill C-18 and at the very least should agree to the suspension by 12 months rather than the 24.

I join many other members who have spoken against Bill C-18 in expressing my concern that B.C. is the province that will be most hurt by the bill. The increase in population of B.C. entitles us to two more seats in the House. Even if we were to hold the number of seats constant, at the very least they should be redistributed to give a more fair representation for the province of B.C.

In my riding of North Vancouver the proposed changes would take a small section at the eastern end of my riding, isolated between the harbour to the east, the harbour to the south, the mountains to the north and sort of append it to another riding on the other side of the harbour, the riding of Port Moody—Coquitlam.

The people in that part of my riding can see that is an impractical way to re-arrange the riding. It is very clear that the member in the Port Moody—Coquitlam area would have to move through two other ridings in order to get to this little appendage that would suddenly be attached to her riding.

However, even though it is clear that isolating this small portion of North Vancouver is not in the public interest, the voters in my area have confidence in the process. They have confidence that by appeal to the commission that this decision would be reversed and a much more sensible decision would be made.

Everyone can see from looking at the map that this particular adjustment was not sensible. Even I, living in that portion and will have my home transferred to another riding, agree with the

process and I am prepared to take my chances with the commission and the hearings.

● (1125)

I vigorously oppose Bill C-18. I am proud that the Reform Party members can stand and say that they were against this government attempt to ram the bill through in a clandestine fashion on a Friday afternoon when nobody is watching style of thing.

In time Canadians will recognize that Reformers once again stood up for democracy while the government stood up for the old line Victorian style of politics. Shame on them, Mr. Speaker.

Miss Grey: S.O.S. Save our seats.

Mr. White (North Vancouver): As the hon. member says, S.O.S. Save our seats. That is the whole attitude of the Liberal government. I urge them to take the moral high road and to vote against this bill.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean H. Leroux (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, as you rightly stated, last October 25, I was elected to represent the riding of Shefford. Let me first describe my wonderful riding. As you know, the region was settled by a group of Americans who came to Canada when the United States seceded from England. Thus, it is part of Quebec's Eastern Townships.

Over time, the boundaries of the riding changed and now include part of Montérégie, and, as I mentioned, part of the riding is in the Eastern Townships.

Shefford is partly an urban riding. The main city is Granby, a well-organized industrial city. The people of Granby are hard-working and they are proud of their roots.

I have lived virtually all my life in Shefford. At times, I moved from one area to another, but I never left the riding.

A proposal has been made to change my riding, to reduce its size. Other ridings would be extended while mine would be reduced to the size of the provincial riding of Shefford, including the town of Bromont. As you know, there is much discussion these days about Bromont, because of the Hyundai plant. Bromont is currently my neighbour. I would like members in the House to know that Bromont was previously known as West Shefford. This city was then part of the former riding of Shefford. Of course, we would welcome its constituents in the proposed new riding of Shefford, but, to do so, we would have to lose an entire section of the riding. So, the sector which includes Saint-Paul-d'Abbotsford, Saint-Césaire and Marieville is to be removed.