

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, January 29, 1987

The House met at 11 a.m.

[English]

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES READJUSTMENT ACT

TABLING OF 1987 REPORT OF ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES
COMMISSION FOR PROVINCE OF MANITOBA

Mr. Speaker: It is my duty pursuant to Section 9 of the Representation Act, 1985, Chapter 8, Statutes of Canada, 1986, to lay upon the table a certified copy of the 1987 report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Manitoba.

[Translation]

Pursuant to the Act, this report is deemed to have been referred to the Standing Committee on Elections, Privileges and Procedure.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

BROADCASTING

TABLING OF REPORT ON POLICY

Hon. David Crombie (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 67(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, copies of the report on broadcasting policy.

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CITIZENSHIP

FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF DECLARATION

Hon. David Crombie (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask all Members of the House of Commons and all Canadians to join with me in celebrating the 40th anniversary of Canadian citizenship.

[Translation]

The Canadian Citizenship Act came into force on January 1, 1947. Before that day we could say we were Canadian citizens, but there was no legal definition of this status. In fact, legally, we were British subjects.

[English]

Our concept of citizenship is relatively new and still changing to reflect the realities of this nation. However, I think all Members of this House will agree when I say that three of the fundamental principles of Canadian citizenship are equality, diversity and community. Our Citizenship Act makes equality a basic tenet of the law. It makes no distinction between citizens by birth and citizens by choice, as do many nations. It also treats the citizenship status of women in their own right rather than simply in relation to that of their spouses. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms defines our national commitment to diversity; respect for the heritage and values of the many cultural groups which enrich the Canadian personality. New Canadians are encouraged to retain their heritage when they accept the responsibilities and rights of Canadian citizenship.

[Translation]

Community spirit is that which prompts us to promote the well-being of others and contribute to the growth and expansion of Canada as a whole. Evidence of this can be seen in all regions of the country.

So we do have many reasons to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Canadian citizenship. I urge all Canadians to organize and take part in various activities in their regions. It does not matter much whether it be a festivity, an exhibition or a show, the main thing is to celebrate Canadian citizenship together.

[English]

I hope all Members will get involved, work with groups in their ridings and plan and hold celebrations, particularly during Citizenship Week in April and on Canada Day. As parliamentarians we can teach much and we can learn much about what Canadian citizenship is all about. To assist members my department has produced a planning guide to help community groups organize local events. The guide is available from the Department of the Secretary of State or through the 28 citizenship courts across Canada.

[Translation]

The concept of citizenship may be relatively new in Canada, but it has certainly evolved over time. This being an anniversary year, I intend to introduce amendments to make the Citizenship Act even newer.

[English]

While most of these amendments will be of a housekeeping nature, I believe a preamble to an amended Act would