

This is not a case of rendering voter equity almost meaningless. For the hon. member for Kindersley—Lloydminster to engage in that kind of rhetoric is not something I would expect of him. I am sure he did not really mean what he said.

**Mr. Hermanson:** You were arguing the same thing in committee.

**Mr. Milliken:** No. I want to turn to the words of the act itself because I think this is important. I do not normally like to read statutes in the House because it is pretty tedious.

• (1550)

I would like to quote from the old Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act that dealt with the power of commissions to go beyond the 25 per cent rule. It stated as follows:

The commission may depart from the strict application of the rules set out in paragraph 1(a) and (b) in any case where:

(a) special geographic—

**Mr. Hermanson:** Dispense.

**Mr. Milliken:** I want the hon. member for Kindersley—Lloydminster to hear this because he said this is bad.

It stated:

(a) special geographic considerations, including in particular the sparsity or density of the population of various regions of the province, the accessibility of those regions or the size or shape thereof, appear to the commission to render such a departure necessary or desirable, or

(b) any special community or diversity of interests of the inhabitants of various regions of the province appears to the commission to render such a departure necessary or desirable,

In other words, those were the tests that the commissions appointed in 1993, and that rendered their reports late last year, had as their guideline.

I ask you, Mr. Speaker, to compare those words with the words in clause 19(3), which the hon. member for Kindersley—Lloydminster says will render voter equity almost meaningless. In 19(3) it states:

A commission may depart from the application of the rule set out in paragraph 2(a) in circumstances that are viewed by the commission as being extraordinary because a part of a province, the population of which is less than 75 per cent of the electoral quota for the province calculated in the manner described in subparagraph 2(a)(i) or (ii), is geographically isolated from the rest of the province or is not readily accessible from the rest of the province.

In other words, the test is narrowed. It is not widened, it is narrowed. It is harder to get a special riding under the new rules. It must meet one of two tests. The old rule allowed the shape, the density or sparsity of population and all kinds of different things to enter into it. That is no longer a consideration. Accessibility is now the test. There are two tests: geographically isolated from

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the rest of the province or not readily accessible from the rest of the province.

We have narrowed the test. The hon. member is still complaining that voter equity is rendered almost meaningless by this test. I suggest to him that he should re-read the old act, read the new bill, and he would conclude, as I do, that his amendment is not well-founded. He should leave those words in the new bill and support this change. It is a good change and one that will result in the basic principle for which we are all striving, that is, effective representation.

### SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Speaker:** I thank the hon. member for his intervention.

Earlier today the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands raised a point of order. It was before question period. It was on the procedural acceptability of Motion 4 in the name of the hon. member for Bellechasse. He argued that the motion went beyond the scope of clause 16.

I have now had the opportunity to review the arguments made earlier this day by both hon. members and I do thank them for their interventions and their arguments.

The Chair has no difficulty in finding the amendment relevant to the clause and the bill since the concept of the formula of section 51 of the Constitution Act, 1867, is clearly introduced in the said clause. Furthermore, it is the opinion of the Chair that the amendment does not seek to amend section 51 of the Constitution Act, 1867, but rather it seeks to add a supplementary consideration for the Chief Electoral Officer in the determination that he must make pursuant to clause 16.

For those reasons I will allow the amendment to go forward.

### MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

[*Translation*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Since the Speaker has now ruled on this matter, we can now deal with Motion No. 4. Someone could move that all the amendments be grouped together for debate.

The hon. member for Bellechasse, on a point of order.

**Mr. Langlois:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to get an indication from the Chair as to how we will debate the motions.

Since Motion No. 4, which is under my name and which is seconded by the hon. member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, is of a different nature than those which relate to a variation of 15 per cent or to the deletion of special clauses, would it not be appropriate to debate them one after the other, and to vote on them separately?