

Representation Act, 1985

getting up like Liberal Members debating the needs and aspirations of their constituents. If the Members feel that they have a good deal, he should elaborate on it. It is just like the Havilland deal. If that is such a great deal for Canada, why is the Government hiding it in some back room until the signatures are dry, Mr. Speaker? You simply cannot offer credibility to Canadians when you say something is a good thing and then fail to have the courage to address it. Therefore, my colleague is suggesting, perhaps in a roundabout way, that Quebecers are looking for leadership and for their interest to be protected and that Government back-benchers are not doing the job.

[Translation]

Mr. St. Julien: Further to the Hon. Member's comments, I would point out to this House that I listened carefully to what was said by the Hon. Members for Prince Albert (Mr. Hovdebo), York West (Mr. Marchi) and Laval-des-Rapides (Mr. Garneau). I would like to say that if we really look at what has been done about this legislation in past years, under the Liberals, for instance, if we refer to the riding of Abitibi, I think there is something very odd because they kept it the same size. If they are interested in what the situation is like in the riding of Abitibi, I shall add that it is located in the largest of our ten Canadian provinces, covers 740,000 square kilometers and has a population of 102,000. And it is going to stay the same size. My comment to the Hon. Member for York West mainly concerns the budget of each Member.

The Hon. Member for York West may think that is bizarre, but the important thing is to tell the Liberals not to travel outside Canada and to stay in their ridings. That is what I have been doing since I was elected to the House of Commons. I avoid travelling outside Canada. I travel in my riding.

And I can guarantee that my riding, which is among the fifteen largest ridings in Canada, is nearly 75 per cent Conservative. And today, among the smallest ridings in Canada, there are about ten that belong to the Liberals, and I am talking about ridings covering five square kilometers, with 69,000 voters.

Personally, I think the Bill is an excellent one, and I live in one of the largest ridings in Canada. I work very hard in my riding, and in my view, this is a very good Bill.

[English]

Mr. Marchi: Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the Hon. Member for Abitibi (Mr. St. Julien) is doing a credible job in his riding. No one ever suggested that he was doing anything but a credible job. That was an objective statement from the Member for Abitibi. If he feels the way it seems, he has 20 minutes available today to explain to this House why he is so positive about Bill C-74. I urge him to tell his constituents through a speech in this Chamber how good Bill C-74 is.

The Member for Abitibi has one of the largest ridings in Quebec. Do his constituents expect him to be a local constituency man? Do they believe that he should be in Ottawa to

make statements and speeches in this House or to lobby the Government for an industry his riding might be needing? I would suggest to the Hon. Member for Abitibi that constituents not only want their Member of Parliament to be in the constituency, as important as it may be, but they want him to do his job in this Chamber through the Government on behalf of his constituents. The Member simply cannot perform both functions. Therefore, the whole discussion of the high-tech, high touch type of involvement through which we are going as espoused by *Megatrend* is applicable to his riding. I am somewhat surprised that rather than suggest ways of delivering a more personalized and effective type of representation he is trying to say that the status quo is okay.

In the Province of Quebec we would have looked at an increase of a minimum of four seats as a way of addressing the shortcomings of a growing impersonalized political landscape. I would urge the Member to join us in this debate and in our demands by allowing Canadians to join in the debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments are now terminated. The Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Fort Garry (Mr. Axworthy).

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg-Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, in these closing days before the parliamentary break, it is unfortunate that the House has such an undignified, hasty, and ill-thought of initiative as the one before us today in the form of the Government's proposed redistribution Bill. It stands in stark contrast to the noble efforts about which history tells us, namely, the fundamental fights that have gone on for proper forms of political representation.

Americans fought a revolution over the question of representation by population. Other countries have gone through great debates of philosophical and intellectual propriety on how to represent people, which is the fundamental base of any democratic system. But what does this Government do? It tinkers, it manipulates, it short shrifts, it short circuits and it provides closure. That shows to what extent the Government provides respect for the parliamentary political system.

This issue is critical to the dignity and stature of this House and the way it is seen and perceived. But what do we have? We have a Government that treats it as another *ad hoc*, capricious initiative fitting already into such a chaotic and unplanned parliamentary timetable that it has to use closure. The Government resorts to the unprecedented initiative of not working out an agreement between Members of all sides of the House, thus turning the issue into a partisan one.

That kind of approach will have a certain insidious result. People will no longer be able to have some sense of respect, trust or confidence that this motion on redistribution is a fair and equitable attempt to provide for effective representation across the country. People will see the approach more as another part of the Mulroney master plan to resurrect the Conservative Party in Canada. That is very dangerous, Mr. Speaker. I certainly have no argument against political Parties trying to advance their interests, but they should know when to do it and what issues to pick. There must be a time and place