

Government Orders

Mr. Bellemare: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Since the microphone used by the hon. member for Lévis was turned off, we missed part of his speech. I wonder whether he could repeat the missing part.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): This is not a point of order as such. The hon. member has no text, so I think we will have to rely on *Hansard*.

Mr. Dubé: Mr. Speaker, at least the hon. member for Carleton—Gloucester will be able to read my speech tomorrow in *Hansard*, and I appreciate his interest. Speaking in the House is interesting when there are members who are interested in what one says, so I commend them for that.

● (1735)

Nevertheless, in the two minutes I have left, I do not want to appear to be opposed to change. On the contrary, those who know me in my community find that I am usually someone who identifies with change and who agrees with change. But I think that the commissions should consider two changes. The first change, which seeks a certain fairness in the number of electors represented per riding, is laudable. It is right in a democracy, but I was just talking about the disadvantages it causes when there are too many changes.

Some countries have a system of proportional representation. I think this is something to consider. I looked at what the latest commission dealing with it had to say and it did not look into it much. Major reports have been written and we could review them.

There is another change, Mr. Speaker, and I think it is the most important one we should make here in Canada or in any democracy, namely financing of political parties. It would be a better way to strengthen and improve democracy than to change electoral maps left and right, I think.

In 1977, Quebec passed Bill 2, as a result of which political parties are financed by individuals and not by corporations, unions, companies and businesses. What has this achieved? It has eliminated a lot of—in politics, often perception is what counts. Since then, people feel that their government is less subject to undue pressure from business. I think that this is an improvement that the people in the Reform Party would also want to support. It would improve election practices, improve government management and finally free the members elected from the various ridings from the pressures to which they may be subject on the basis of party financing.

I think that it would be tremendous progress and I still do not understand why, although people dealt with it as part of that royal commission on electoral reform and party financing. Although the general public was heard on this subject and agreed with this reform, it got nowhere.

If I have one suggestion to make, and I conclude with that, we really should look into the financing of political parties by the people.

[English]

Mr. Fred Mifflin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to rise to speak on second reading of Bill C-18, an act to suspend the operation of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act and refer it to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

I do not want to engage myself in a certain tone of debate which talks about issues that are not really pertinent to the act or to the substance of the issue because of the limited time and because it is not my style to engage in that kind of debate.

I want to have a look at why I am supporting the bill. I am going to restrict it to my riding of Bonavista—Trinity—Conception to try to give all sides of the House an indication of how it is viewed by my constituents. I have received many phone calls, and quite frankly the constituents who have called me are dumbfounded. That is the best word to describe them. They are dumbfounded by what is going on.

Let us look at the chronology from their viewpoint. There was a comment made in the House that I will correct. The last change did not take place in 1980. It took place in 1988. As I was entering politics the change was made, and let me say what it did to my riding. The name of the riding of Bonavista—Trinity—Conception has been around for a long time. It describes and rightly so the three bays on the east coast of Newfoundland: Bonavista Bay, Trinity Bay and Conception Bay. Before the present boundaries were set the southern part of my riding took in the northern half of Conception Bay, almost a straight line down through the bay. The previous boundary took in the northern part of Conception Bay and all of Trinity Bay but only the southern part of Bonavista Bay, not including the well-known Terra Nova Park.

● (1740)

After the last census and the study of the commission that we are now trying to put on hold it was argued, and rightly so, that the riding of Bonavista—Trinity—Conception should include all of Bonavista Bay because there was a similarity with communities with respect to issuing fishing licences and the consideration of the community of interest, geographical reasons and similarly aligned issues.

It was argued that all of Bonavista Bay should be included. It was also argued that for the southern part of the previous boundary certain communities—I think there were seven of them including Brigus, Collier's, Whitbourne, Georgetown and Markland—should not be included because they were closely related to St. John's and had more of an urban interest. Their community of alignment was with the riding of St. John's East.