

Government Orders

do as they were told. I will tell you that is exactly not what the Canadian voters want from their elected members at this time.

I am encouraged when I discover that the viewing audience has tripled. I think the viewing audience is going to triple again as we get closer to the election and the Canadian voters realize what has been going on in this place.

The arrogance toward the voters perhaps can be partly explained by this leading in the polls. That is pretty heady stuff: We can do no wrong; look where we are in the polls.

I would suggest that is a very artificial number to base their popularity on. They should look to Ontario, because it was a very good indication of how wrong that can be. It was their own party that was leading in the polls in that province, in Ontario. When the rubber hit the road, when they got down to talking about the issues, it was just blown away. That is what it is all about today: it is the issues and who is best addressing those issues and who is listening to the voters.

I suggest to you that day after day we are seeing that this government is not listening. It is still the same old: "We know best. Listen to your leader. Do not worry about the voters". That is the tragedy for them. It is our salvation, because it is going to ensure a government that will be elected in 1997 that is truly listening to the people. I suggest that is going to be the Reform government.

Mrs. Carolyn Parrish (Mississauga West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I was in my office watching the TV and shouting at it and decided I might as well come over here and ask the members opposite the questions I was shouting at my television set.

I am rather amazed at their lack of knowledge of the bill, since they are here to save the country money and they are here to be representing the people and they are here to be efficient.

The old boundary system was cobbled together by a bunch of dinosaurs called Tories, who are now sitting in the Senate trying to block legislation. They have another set of dinosaurs who are helping them in the process.

There are three things in this bill that I would like the hon. member opposite to respond to on a very practical basis. When we have these public meetings to look at the electoral boundary drawings, people go to these meetings and they have absolutely no knowledge of what happens when they change part of the boundary in the current system.

I was on the committee that designed the new system. I come from a riding with 250,000 people and it has not been changed in 10 years. Ten years ago it had 88,000 people. When these people go in and they are supposed to give intelligent responses to the way the boundaries are drawn, they have no idea what happens to the

population within those boundaries when they move them to take in a community of interest.

This bill gives three alternatives with the numbers of people in each of those three alternatives and it gives the rationale for picking the one the riding commission picked. This is representation in an intelligent way, rather than some sort of chaotic magical way.

The other thing it does is that it says it will be redistributed every five years instead of every ten. So you will not have a member standing here who yells at television sets because she is over-worked with 250,000 people. And it will be 300,000 before the next election. How do the members opposite respond to that?

In this bill, it says there will be no redistribution in provinces that have not had a remarkable change in population. This is really a cost saver, because the old system had a commission appointed, it had all kinds of bureaucrats appointed, and they had all kinds of wheels turning when it was not necessary.

I would like the member opposite to specifically respond to those three questions and not give me great long speeches about the way we are running the government.

Mr. Harper (Simcoe Centre): Madam Speaker, I am really pleased that the hon. member opposite stopped shouting at her TV set and came down to face the real world. I wish more members would face the real world and stop sitting there yelling at TV sets. Those members are not listening and getting involved in the process.

• (1145)

The member's first question dealt with the ignorance of the public, that the public came to the meetings and did not know anything. That is a major mistake. The member is underestimating just how smart the voters are. The member does them a disservice when she makes remarks like that. She thinks that most people came to those meetings without knowing anything; the voters are mindless out there and need our direction, that we have to get into the system and help explain life to them. I suggest to the member opposite that they are a lot smarter than she ever gives them credit for being.

The system was not changed because of any hue and cry from the public. The system was changed because some self-serving politicians on that side of the House said: "It is going to hurt my chances of getting re-elected". That is what we are talking about here. The voters did not ask for this. The backbenchers on the government side did. Their kingdom was threatened. The member may not have said this but many did say: "This is a threat to my kingdom and I have to do something about it. Let us scrap this \$5 million that we have wasted of the taxpayers' money and let us redo it all so that I can be looked after here and have a chance of getting re-elected".