

According to the most recent maps, some senior cabinet ministers will lose their seats, including Norman Lamont in London, a person who is not an insignificant figure in the Conservative Party. However, not one member in that country has gone to his caucus and asked that the act be revised in order to retain the old maps. They accept the inevitable, which is that after every revision, someone will be hurt and someone may be favoured.

It is not the future of 295 members which should concern us; it is the equality, as much as possible, of one citizen, one vote which should preoccupy us at all times. If that means affecting sitting members, that is what is known as "rough justice" and that is something which they must accept.

Certain members of the Liberal Party of the Ontario caucus would not accept that. For some reason, which I am sure it must regret, the government went along with their request, and that is why Bill C-18 was introduced.

This bill was not the result of perceived or recognized flaws in the current act. The current act has worked well. The commissioners have been well selected and have been highly respected. Over all, they have done a good job. Members of the House of Commons were able to intervene in the process before the maps were tabled and will have an opportunity to intervene in the process prior to the maps being confirmed.

The reason we have Bill C-18 is simply to answer the complaints of a limited number of members of one caucus.

Senator Gigantès: You voted for Bill C-18.

Senator Lynch-Staunton: We voted on Bill C-18 bearing in mind the deadline and with the assurance that once the suspension period came to an end, the commissions would continue their work and not have to be revived. We made the assumption that the act would be improved. We also made the assumption that some of the delays — such as the provision that a year must expire before the final proclamation order is confirmed — could be shortened.

When Mr. Kingsley came before the committee, he told us that, with the experience of the last 30 years, with new technology and knowledge, the time necessary for the whole process could be shortened. We agreed that would be beneficial.

We never thought, as Senator Carstairs has admitted, that we would see a bill where the Speaker of the House of Commons would be compromised. He is made part of the process in such a way that his hands are tied.

Under the present system and under the proposed system, there are three members for each electoral boundaries commission in every province and the Northwest Territories. The chairman is named by the Chief Justice from amongst the judges in his jurisdiction. The other two are named under the current act by the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Nowhere does it say in the act that he must consult. I am sure that Mr. Fraser consulted. I am sure that Madame Sauvé

consulted. I am sure they must have first consulted their own political parties. But no matter who they consulted or did not consult, their choices were final and could not be appealed. The Speaker was given his own choice in the long run. Whether a minority or majority party agreed, there was nothing they could do about it.

In the proposed bill, the Speaker must consult because the appropriate clause says "After consultation, the Speaker will...." With whom will he consult? Of course, he will consult with all the parties. However, he will have to not only consult but get the approval of the government party. That is because if 20 sitting members of the House of Commons are unhappy with any one or many of his choices, they can move a motion in the House of Commons challenging them.

The government is suggesting that, whereas now the Speaker is independent of political pressure in making his final choice, he will henceforth become subject to it; otherwise, his choices will no doubt be challenged.

It is all very well to say that was included to allow the minority parties to at least express their dissatisfaction.

Senator Murray: That was the explanation given by Mr. Milliken: real politics. They wanted to get their hands in at the front end.

Senator Lynch-Staunton: Exactly. The minority parties may well make representations and make a motion if 20 of them are so inclined, but we know that it is the majority which can decide, and the majority will certainly decide. In particular, if the minority parties are unhappy with the choices, the majority government party will vote the motion down.

Senator Thériault: What about your caucus?

Senator Lynch-Staunton: They will vote it down. Rather than having sitting members who have a vested interest in the process intervening directly during the end of the initial map-making process and intervening a second time before the end of the map-making process, they would intervene right at the beginning so that, in effect, the government would name two of the three commissioners in each jurisdiction, right off the bat.

I have yet to be convinced that this is an improvement in the law. This is regressive. The whole purpose of the current act was to get rid of gerrymandering. Allowing the government to name two of the three commissioners is an encouragement to gerrymandering. Surely, this is one practice we want to stop.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Senator Lynch-Staunton: Where do we stand now? The new maps, which had been held in abeyance by Mr. Kingsley until June 22, have been tabled in the House of Commons. We are now approaching the end of the process. The calendar is as follows: MPs must respond to the map; and file their objections or comments, if any, by July 22.