

Private Members' Business

Writing in the *Edmonton Journal*, former Alberta Premier Don Getty said: "The package was so difficult to get, I would say it was almost a miracle that we were able to put it together". Yet here the Reform Party, having worked against it and having striven for its defeat, now is pulling chunks out of it and saying it supports this and that, let us do this and let us do that. It shows what a lack of sound policy thinking it has. It keeps going back to things that are really dead. The Reform Party should rethink this resolution.

I urge the hon. member for Mission—Coquitlam to consult with her leader again, refer him to the quote I have read from the little green book, and ask him what he really thinks of this motion to see if he does not think that perhaps it is pie in the sky, unnecessary, and not a reasonable thing to put forward in Canada as we know it today, having gone through these two recent constitutional discussions at great length and at great pain to our country.

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have a few notes to keep me on track, but after some of the unbelievable rhetoric I heard coming from the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands I feel like throwing them out and straightening the record on all the things I would probably make unparliamentary reference to if I were not under complete control.

The one comment I will make is about how the hon. member said that former Premier Peterson of Ontario was thrown out of office because he agreed to reduce some of the seats for Ontario in the Charlottetown accord. I suggest he was thrown out of office because he was a Liberal. We will soon see that happening on the other side here as well.

I will deal with other parts that he erroneously brought forward in the content of my comments today.

The Senate is something about which I hear a lot of complaints. It is an ongoing complaint within my riding. I have a tremendous number of people who communicate with me in one form or another asking why the Senate is even there and calling for its abolition.

One of the things I have suggested to them is that the Senate in its current form does not provide much of a benefit to Canadians. It is in essence a rubber stamp most assuredly for the balance of this term of government, now that the Liberals have functional control of it, and carrying on for as long as it takes the balance to shift again once we have managed to send the Liberals to the other side of the House, chasing after Mr. Peterson. There is no need for it to be a rubber stamp, but that is the way the system currently works. We are saying rather than abolish it, change it into something that is far more democratic.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands, the Prime Minister and many others who occasionally sound out on the other side of the House keep talking about the Charlottetown accord and how we rejected not the Charlottetown accord but the triple E Senate. The Charlottetown accord was not about a triple E Senate. That was a little carrot put in there, which was kind of like putting a bad tasting pill in something sweet to try to attract us.

• (1415)

The Reform Party gave full credit to any part of the Charlottetown accord that was worth while. We said there were some good parts. At any place I went to address the Charlottetown accord, the first thing I commented on were the good parts, not all the garbage that was in there. Believe me, there was plenty. Some of the parts were actually good.

It is absolutely ludicrous that the Liberals, every time we try to bring up something that has some linkage to the old Charlottetown accord, say it was offered to us on a platter and we turned it down.

There are three parts to a triple E Senate. First is the elected Senate. We could have that part now without any constitutional amendment. It takes absolutely no change. It takes the co-operation of the Prime Minister and his Liberal cronies to agree to do what the majority of Canadians would like to see.

We have already seen it. We have seen the democratic election of Senator Stan Waters in Alberta. As other vacancies have occurred, we have called on the Prime Minister to allow that province to designate who it would like him to appoint by allowing it to hold a democratic election, as Alberta did, instead of appointing some Liberal hack he had some obligation to look after for one reason or another. The majority of Albertans said they wanted Stan Waters.

Why not start this now? The reason is that the Liberals would not have any place to pay off all the people they have obligations to and to put future obligations on people whom they place in the Senate.

Many senators not only could get elected but would be willing to stand for election. It would give them the credibility they may be due but have lost because most people look on the Senate simply as being loaded up with friends and people who have special ties to the party in power, whatever that party might be.

What does electing senators provide? It provides regional representation from people who do not owe their allegiance to their patron but instead can represent the people of the region they come from.

The second part of a triple E Senate is equality, the equalness of the Senate. It calls for an equal number of senators from each province. We live in a country that goes by the concept in government of representation by population, the ultimate definition of democracy which should not be changed.