

Government Orders

More does not mean better. That has just been proved by the statistics that came out from StatsCanada today. Those stats have proved that more taxes mean fewer dollars in the pockets of the average family. In 1989 the average family income was \$46,000, and because of this increased government and the increased taxes that has now dropped to \$43,000. So the average family income has declined by \$3,000. There is a very clear example that more means less and does not improve the situation. We are overgoverned.

You can look at Australia. It was mentioned earlier that Australia would double the number of voters per member for Canada. Germany has about two and a half times the voters per member, and just south of the border the United States has five times the voters per member. So you can certainly justify reducing the number of members we have in this House.

• (1135)

We just had an Ontario election in which one item in the common sense revolution was to reduce the size of the legislature. They wanted to take a 25 per cent reduction. That common sense revolution was overwhelmingly supported by the majority of people in Ontario based on that: less government, more efficient government. More does not mean better. We can do a better job.

In talking about the Ontario election, the common sense revolution would do away with MP pensions and let members look after their own pensions and get out of the taxpayers' pockets. We have not got that message here in Ottawa. We just changed the gold plated pension plan to a platinum. We did a little bit of scraping. But I suggest it is not going to sit well with the Canadian voter and it will be a major issue in the next federal election.

Reference was made to the gun control legislation that has been rammed through. You have to vote the party line and never mind what the people in your riding say. They say that in the red book they said they would do this. There is nothing in the red book about registration. The red book did talk about getting tough with the criminal use of firearms, but there is nothing in there about registration.

The voters in Ontario sent a very strong message, but it will be missed. All others have. I am sure this one will go right over the heads of the Liberals and they will continue to miss it. The voters of Ontario said they want a government that will listen, they want less government. But it has been ignored, and the Liberals will pay dearly for it in the next election.

There are some members opposite who have been listening to the voters. I would just like to quote some from the earlier debate. I will go back to Bill C-18, the debate we had in March 1994. I believe it was the solicitor general who said: "Since Confederation the number of seats in the House of Commons has increased steadily, from 181 in 1867 to the current level of 295. If new rules

had not been adopted some years ago the number of members by now would be more than 340. This is something we should be considering". Amen. I think that is right on.

There was the member for Halton—Peel, and I quote from the debate: "If one looks at Australia, for example, there are about twice as many voters per member in that country. We are at the point where we have to make some changes. Either that or we are going to have to knock out one of the walls". Right on. This House is full. There is no more room.

The parliamentary secretary to the minister of public works: "In the 34th Parliament I had suggested that perhaps this Parliament should look at the possibility of significantly reducing the number of MPs. Would this not be an opportunity to see whether we could do with one-quarter or perhaps one-third fewer MPs?" What fresh thinking. Right on. There is some hope over there. There is a germ of common sense.

The Liberal member for Carleton—Gloucester, and I quote: "Is this room not getting a little crowded, and has our national and public debt not grown so much that we should act to curb their growth?" Right on again. At a saving of possibly \$28 million a year, there could be substantial improvement in reducing our debt and deficit and at the same time doing a better job for the Canadian taxpayer.

Just to go back to the bill and looking at some of the amendments that have been proposed by the Senate, there are some that we can support, like the one that will reduce the allowable deviation from the provincial electoral quota from 25 per cent to 15 per cent. We proposed that and we can support it. It will help equalize the voting power between constituencies within a province.

We can support the requirement that the two non-judicial commission members be resident in the province for which the commission is established. That makes good, common sense.

There are some amendments in there that have been proposed by the Senate that we can support. However, in what we are debating here today, unfortunately we are wasting a lot of time and failing to deal with the real issues and the real problems the country is facing.

• (1140)

In closing, I heard the other day that the number of people who are watching this parliamentary channel has tripled in this 35th Parliament. I was really encouraged by that, because what it says is that the Canadian people are watching what is going on here. They are watching and they are listening. That is good news, because they are not just taking what is necessarily recorded in the press as being the gospel but they are watching what is being said and done here. They are watching those votes. They are watching those members who had the courage to stand up and represent the people in their ridings. They know the ones who were told to sit down and