

*Government Orders*

would think that it did not even exist. For the interest of the House I might mention that Mr. Mel Smith, former constitutional adviser to the province of British Columbia, in the lead paragraph in an article he has just written says: "British Columbians of every political stripe should be up in arms over the current scheme by the government to subvert the most fundamental principle of democratic society, representation by population and in the process deprive British Columbia of seats it is entitled to in the next House of Commons".

• (1120)

What can we do to get proper representation for the province of British Columbia? We recognize that we do have one particular anomaly with respect to representation by population and that is Prince Edward Island where the average population per seat ranges between 30,000 and 34,000. So be it. It is a fact of history. It is an anomaly.

What about the province of Ontario? Under distribution as we currently have it, seats range in population from 63,000 to 209,000. I would suspect that the constituents that are represented by the member for Mississauga West must be wondering why the Liberal government in absolute union stood up en masse and said that was fine. For Mississauga West we can have 209,000 population versus 63,000 population. It is all right.

It is fair and good to say we are going to redistribute the seats in Parliament. We are going to do things differently. We are going to go into the process. However someone has suggested that many of the processes in Ottawa resemble glacial time. An ice age will come and go. We are going to be fighting the next election based on 1981 census figures.

What has happened in metropolitan Toronto? What has happened in Alberta? What has happened in Vancouver? In these areas we have had an absolute explosion of population and now these people are under-represented.

Let me also state that another problem is one of geography. Coming from an area that is bounded by mountains I recognize the difficulty in representing the number of people that I represent versus the number of people that are represented in constituencies in greater Vancouver. Again we have anomalies or variances. It is something we will have to discuss when we are talking about geography because of travel and distances. As a consequence substantial dollars are spent. If I, as a member of Parliament, am going to be representing more people we are going to be into more costs.

The Reform Party stands for representation by population in the lower House. We suggest that this motion is a tactic, it is a fait accompli because the Liberal government used closure to inflict on us these anomalies. Perhaps we even have to take a closer look at the other place. We are currently represented by people appointed there.

Canadians should be aware of the fact that Premier Filmon, as I understand it, is presently taking a look at the possibility of putting a ballot forward at the next provincial election in Manitoba in the same way that the province of Alberta did concerning the election of a senator.

I would suggest to all Canadians watching this broadcast that they give serious consideration to writing the premier and supporting him in the hope of getting proper representation within Canada. In the lower House we would have representation by population, if indeed we ever get around to it, and in the upper House we would have at least one more of the *Es* which would be an elected member in that Chamber.

I listened with interest to the Secretary of State when he mentioned that the results of redistribution were published without input. Perhaps some people would find it amusing that he is bringing up the point just at a time when we will be having public input. At the time when ordinary Canadians were going to have the opportunity to have input to this most fundamental part of our democratic process, the Liberals shut down the process. That is rather interesting.

• (1125)

However, to make something good of something bad, we recognize there is a strong desire on the part of all Canadians to see a cap on the number of members of Parliament. The secretary stated that earlier in the debate. He said that Canadians are tired of the continual increase. Canadians want to see a change.

Therefore, I would like to move an amendment to the motion. I move:

That the motion be amended by deleting paragraph (a) and substituting the following:

"(a) a formula to cap or reduce the number of seats in the House of Commons."

**Ms. Margaret Bridgman (Surrey North):** Mr. Speaker, in my address I shall focus on the aspect of the motion of whether the number of MPs should continually increase. In the course of this I shall include some thoughts on the geographical and electoral boundary concerns.

In keeping with the concept of representation by population or each MP representing approximately an equal number of Canadian citizens, two factors influence this. One is the constant increase in the number of Canadians and the other would be the movement of the population within our borders.

Two options present themselves as methods of achieving this representation by population, the first one being that we could establish the number of MPs we would have in the House and divide that number into the total number of Canadians to obtain the number of citizens that each MP would represent. This representation number becomes the variable that would change each time we address this process.