

Private Members' Business

over the government. Instead it must be looked on as a constructive measure for the good of the country.

The public must realize the MPs they elect really do have a say in what happens. Then they will be more careful in their selection of their MPs. They will make sure it is someone they can trust to represent them and not just the party position.

Freer votes will mean that MPs will express the views of their constituents better. It will take government right back to the people. Some of executive power will be moved out of cabinet hands to the true representatives in the House. It will allow for a much greater accountability of MPs because members will not point to a party line when voting against the wishes of their constituents. MPs should always be responsible to the wishes of their constituents.

We have greatly underestimated the ability of the electorate to get involved, become informed and thus participate in direct democracy. The more complex form of representative government got us into the \$500 billion deficit and other serious problems we now have. Let us let freer direct democracy get us out of those problems.

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the House for giving me the opportunity to speak to motion M-89 of the hon. member for Mission—Coquitlam. Right off the top I want to say I do not accept the position of the hon. member's party on confidence.

I would like to address the three points put forward by the hon. member, the first being relaxing the confidence convention, the second being history, and the third being the aspects of freer voting.

The first concerns relaxing the confidence convention. If there is one conclusion that can be drawn from 300 years of political thought it is that there is not one correct interpretation of confidence. Reform's view is that confidence need only be expressed in formal votes. I think this is a mistake in the thought process.

To quote the hon. member's remark to "feel free to vote with the government members from time to time", I assume she was speaking of the opposition. I asked the table clerk to provide me with the number of votes we have had since the beginning of this 35th Parliament. We have had 31 votes and not once from day one has anyone from that hon. member's party broken ranks.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Keyes: And some of them applaud. Well, congratulations to that party and the solidarity it shows behind its ideology and its ideas about how this country should act and look.

On the position of history, like my colleagues in this House I am privileged to serve my constituents. I am privileged to serve the constituents of Hamilton West. They know Stan Keyes. They know what he stands for. They know what he has no tolerance

for. They know his deeply held beliefs, his deeply held convictions.

• (1150)

The hon. member opposite is sadly mistaken if she thinks I or anyone else on this side of the House can be blindly led. If I supported a government objective that went against any of my well known principles I would be laughed out of this office, out of this House, out of this job. I remind the member for Mission—Coquitlam that I was re-elected.

The third point was the issue of freer voting. Since the opening of the 35th Parliament Reform MPs have repeatedly called upon the government to accept the doctrine that "the government not consider the defeat of a government motion including a spending measure to constitute an expression of non-confidence in the government, unless it is immediately followed by the passage of a formal non-confidence motion".

This is directly related to the Reform Party's desire to see increased direct democracy within the Canadian federal system. Reform has long argued that direct democracy is manifested through citizens initiatives, binding referenda, a recall mechanism and free votes in the House of Commons. Let us look at that for a second.

This weekend the hon. member's party, the third party of this House, tried a little experiment in direct democracy. According to an Ottawa newspaper: "Reform leader Preston Manning learned democracy does not always go as planned when a majority of people watching a televised town hall meeting last night voted in favour of allowing doctor assisted suicides. To quote Mr. Manning, care has to be exercised in making a simplistic interpretation of the results".

Well what about the simplistic, shallow, minimal amount of time presented by both sides of that argument. It is very easy to get on national television to present arguments pro and con on any matter and then ask everyone on the basis of those arguments to phone in, if they can afford to have a touchtone phone and there are many Canadians who cannot. That process shuts out how many Canadians who either cannot afford to have a phone or have a dial phone so they cannot participate in that party's direct democracy. Then a decision is made based on those arguments by dialling whatever number for whatever decision a person wants to make, yes or no, right or wrong, pro or con.

How does one prevent the process of stacking in such a process? We know what stacking is. Some of us here in this House went through the abortion debate. Stacking means the ability of one organization to overcome the organization through organization. It is the ability to put the process together better than the other guy because maybe they have more money than the other guy. This is where the faultlines and cracks are in this party's ideas.