

amendment) from the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections; and Motion No. 2 (Mr. Hnatyshyn).

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest):** When the House rose at one o'clock, the Hon. Member for Laurier (Mr. Berger) had the floor. As the Hon. Member is not present, is there another Hon. Member who wishes to enter the debate?

**Mr. Bob Horner (Mississauga North):** Mr. Speaker, I will be brief. It is a pleasure for me to speak on the Bill today as its subject matter is especially important in my constituency of Mississauga North.

At last official count in the 1981 census, Mississauga North, with over 140,000 voters, was the second most populated riding in Canada. Indeed, between 1976 and 1981, total population in my riding increased by 39.1 per cent, nearly nine times the provincial growth rate of 4.4 per cent. During this same period, the population of voting age grew by 47.9 per cent compared with the Ontario figure of 9.9 per cent.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that Mississauga North continues to grow in this same fashion, and it would come as no surprise to me if our upcoming census shows Mississauga North to be the most populated riding in Canada. While I would enjoy the opportunity to speak at further length about the reasons for and the advantages of such tremendous growth, I will save bragging about my riding for another opportunity, and come immediately to the matter at hand, Bill C-74.

This Bill is not one that has commanded a great deal of attention in the media. It seems our friends in the media have other priorities. It is my belief, however, that this is a very important piece of legislation which will shape the nature of the House of Commons, and even influence parliamentary procedure. The Bill guarantees that the House will retain its particular character. The Bill ensures that Members will not lose the influence they have, and it ensures that the Canadian parliamentary tradition will be effectively continued. It ensures the preservation of a system which is unique to Canada, while it accounts for growth and change in this still young nation. All said, Bill C-74 has not received its due share of public attention.

● (1640)

The ideas contained in the Bill are well founded in Canadian history, yet the impetus for this legislation comes from a modern day Government. In September, 1984, we were given a mandate for positive change. Our Government proposes changes in this Bill which have arisen from broad consultation, changes which will prevent unchecked, costly growth of Parliament.

Representation by population, or "rep by pop" as it is more commonly known, is an idea which has been central to Canadian parliamentary tradition. The necessity for fair and adequate regional representation has as well been a serious consideration for every Canadian Government dealing with this matter. Our first federal Government—and I remind the House that it was a Conservative Government—successfully dealt with all these considerations in 1867. In 1975, the

### *Representation Act, 1985*

previous Government amended the Constitution Act, 1867, so that the number of Members of Parliament allotted to each province would be adjusted after each decennial census. Over the years, these adjustments have meant that the House of Commons is now filled to near capacity. Indeed, I would venture that the unchecked growth of the House would require the conversion of the opposition lobby to government benches. With the amount of activity, or might I say inactivity, in the opposition lobby, it might be put to better use if we converted it to government benches.

Rather than allowing the House to grow at an uncontrollable level, our Government has introduced a Bill which addresses the two important considerations of representation by population and fair regional representation. The Bill also means that the growth of the House will be restricted. In the next election, we propose the addition of 13 seats, bringing the number to 295. Thereafter, increases will be smaller. In 1991, we recommend 296 seats, and for the year 2001, we propose a House of 298 seats.

There has been some criticism of the Bill. However, it is my opinion that the Bill could not be more fair. The procedure for drafting the legislation was fair. We consulted all concerned parties to elicit public opinion. We published a White Paper on redistribution in June, 1985, which was subsequently referred for consideration to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections. After careful consideration of the amendments contained in the White Paper, the committee reported favourably. The Bill is fair because it ensures that provinces with stable or declining populations will not lose seats in the House. In the Canadian system, the loss of seats has always engendered great concern. Since the Bill contains the proviso that a province will not lose its present number of seats, the necessity of fair and equitable representation is addressed.

The Bill is fair because it provides for more seats in areas of tremendous population growth, while it ensures that transitory population trends are not permanently reflected in the composition of the House. Our theory for redistribution is careful in accounting for transitory growth trends.

However, it is also important that the Bill is fair to Canadian taxpayers. Based upon 1984 figures, in the first redistribution after the Bill's passage, and even after accounting for the cost of the electoral boundaries readjustment commissions, it is estimated that Canadian taxpayers will save approximately \$1 million. Indeed, if the previous legislation was to be left unaltered, the cost of Parliament would skyrocket. While we recognize the value of our own staff and of the House of Commons support staff, we all realize their and our expense. Under the terms of the existing legislation, the House would have 369 seats in the year 2001. Without doubt that would be an expensive proposition.

The Bill gives us the best of all worlds—areas of great population growth will enjoy increased representation in the House, unchecked growth of the House is restricted, and we save valuable tax dollars.

Finally, one of the unique and outstanding features of the Bill is the way in which it reforms certain procedures of the