

Supply

Even in Atlantic Canada there were some Reform movements that have sprung up.

The problem is not the fact of understanding what reform is all about and the changes that need to be made. I think we all understand that. We even understand, in spite of what the hon. member said, that some changes have been proposed and adopted by this House that would relax the confidence convention. However, the Prime Minister has not seemed to relay that message to his caucus and that is what concerns us.

We have seen the same problem in provincial legislatures. In fact, provincial legislatures which are governed by the hon. member's party, the NDP, exercise extremely strict party discipline.

One other matter that needs to be clear, and I would like to get the hon. member's comment on, is that we are not talking about free votes as being free spirited endeavours on behalf of individual members. We are talking about the members' freedom to vote the wishes of their constituents. There is quite a difference between voting how I might feel I should vote as an individual and in fact voting the wishes of my constituents.

We in Reform have not come here and promoted just a bunch of free spirits voting however they please on every issue. We have been talking about difficult or divisive issues where in fact the party's position may differ from that of a member's constituents. I am sure it happens on the government side where the government has proposed legislation which individual member's constituents are definitely opposed to.

We know what happened in the last House with the GST where members were told not to support the GST and they came into this House and stood with the government on the GST. Through their hands they said to their constituents: "You don't count. We don't care what you say. We have to vote with the government", even though these reforms apparently were in place.

• (2140)

The matter is not that the reforms are not there to be used. The problem is in acting them out in this House. I would ask the hon. member to respond to that and in fact even with regard to the provincial legislature where his party is the governing party.

Mr. Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, I said that I thought Canadian politics was dominated too much by party discipline. I mean that as an across the board comment.

I would point out to the member that there is a free vote in the Ontario legislature tonight sponsored by an NDP government. It is a counter example to what the member is saying. But I agree. When the McGrath committee recommended that there be a broader range of issues on which people should feel free of party discipline it meant that for all parties. When I signed that report I meant that for all parties.

With respect to the other issue the member raised—I see you rising, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps the House would just allow me to respond to the final point about what is the role of members of Parliament when we are freed up from party discipline. Are we then freed up from party discipline to vote our conscience, or to vote with the majority of our constituents, or perhaps they might overlap, or perhaps they might be in conflict.

It is a much more complicated matter than what Reform members tend to argue is the case because they argue that it is a question of respecting the majority view of their constituents.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I regret the hon. member's time of five minutes for questions and comments has expired. Is the hon. member asking for unanimous consent? Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The question is on the amendment.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): All those in favour of the amendment will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): In my opinion the nays have it.

Pursuant to the order adopted earlier today the division on the question now before the House stands deferred until later this day at 10 p.m. at which time the bells to call in the members will be sounded for not more than 15 minutes.

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MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed Bill S-5, an act to incorporate the Canadian Association of Lutheran Congregations, to which the concurrence of this House is desired.

Pursuant to Standing Order 135(2) the bill is deemed to have been read the first time and ordered for second reading at the next sitting of the House.