

Government Orders

of a given urban riding to be modified to take in new constituents subsequent to an extension to one of this riding's main arteries into what would have been another riding and would have divided a natural community?

We should decide on a case by case basis, determine whether the social fabric is homogenous in a given urban riding and whether adding a block or two would upset anything. If the fabric is not homogeneous in another urban riding, for example, if there is a variety or a mosaic of populations to be represented, the situation is different. Let us avoid generalizations and the Reformers' approach which is to generalize everything, level off both peaks and valleys any way they can and split hairs in their counts. It is an approach, an attitude which, from the point of view of legislation and electoral representation, we believe is to be condemned.

We would much prefer living with a variation of 25 per cent between ridings. But the Reform Party goes much further. It would like to drop subclause 19(3), which would permit commissions to allow a variation of more than 25 per cent because of geography, geographic isolation or inaccessibility. Obviously, we cannot agree with the Reform Party's proposal.

This would rule out a separate riding for the Magdalen Islands, considerably expand the riding of Manicouagan in Quebec, affect the riding of Cochrane—Superior, the riding of Nickel Belt, all of northern Ontario, as well as his own riding. The hon. member may have a death wish, but you can be sure that I will not fly in his plane.

In our opinion, clause 19.(3) is an inadequate safeguard. What we proposed in committee was to maintain the current situation allowing the commissions to depart from the rules on the 25 per cent variation every time they see fit to do so for reasons related to a community's special characteristics or the various interests of people in different parts of the province. The government has considerably reduced the impact. The commission will now be able to deviate by more than 25 per cent, but only below that percentage. This means that it cannot go above 125 per cent. Therefore, this criterion is also inadequate in a homogeneous urban riding.

• (1540)

As you can easily understand, Mr. Speaker, there is no way we can support either of the amendments proposed by the Reform Party of Canada. Could you tell me how much time I have left?

The Deputy Speaker: I was not in the chair this morning, and have been advised that we are debating Motions Nos. 1, 2 and 3; Motion No. 6 has been withdrawn; the Speaker will rule on the acceptability of Motion No. 4 momentarily. You should therefore have enough time to finish your speech.

Mr. Langlois: Mr. Speaker, what are we to make of a political formation, namely the Reform Party of Canada, which calls for a triple E Senate where the provinces would each be represented

by six senators—every one of them, from Prince Edward Island to Quebec, to Ontario, to British Columbia—regardless of their relative population, but not when it comes to representation in the House of Commons? They would like to make this House as uniform as possible, with every member exactly the same height. If they could all come in a five foot eleven and 172 pound format, that would be perfect. That is pretty well what the Reform Party of Canada is suggesting.

The Reform Party had better make up its mind. How can it be for a triple E Senate, with six senators representing 120,000 people in one case and the exact same number of senators representing Ontario, the largest province in Canada, with 30 per cent of the total population? This does not make sense. Either the Reformists are for equal representation or they are not. Somehow they manage to be both at the same time.

I hope that Reform members will rise on this issue and elaborate on their view of a tripe E Senate, while the House of Commons can function very well with a deviation of plus or minus 25 per cent.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, so far I agree with the position of the hon. member for Bellechasse concerning the amendments put forth by the hon. member for Kinderley—Lloydminster. I am pleased to speak after him in this debate because he has set out so clearly the major aspects of this issue.

[English]

I also want to make my own point to the hon. member for Kindersley—Lloydminster. I know he has had lots of practice in making that speech.

We considered this question in committee in the days of when we were deciding what to do. The House had a debate on this issue in referring the matter to the committee. The issue was first raised then. We studied it in committee and made a report to the House. We had a motion for concurrence at which time this was one of the hotly debated issues and we heard the hon. member for Kindersley—Lloydminster then.

We had a bill for second reading which was passed without debate, but then in committee we went back into this issue as we studied this clause in the bill. We made some changes that the hon. member for Kindersley—Lloydminster did not like. I see that one of his amendments is to delete those good changes.

Then we come back to the House and here we have it again. I will lay dollars to doughnuts that we are going to hear the same debate from the hon. member on third reading. He is persistent, I grant him that and he has had lots of practice giving his speech.

I enjoyed his remarks this afternoon. I know he had hoped he had convinced me that we should agree to some changes in this part of the bill and accept his amendments. I do not agree with the amendments he has put forward and I want to give him, the