

### Government Orders

By the looks of it we are going to go into the next election, whenever that may be, with the same seat distribution as we had in 1981. That is totally unacceptable. I do not understand, even if they were the best of intentions, which I question, why we would be saddled with inadequate representation going right through to the turn of the century.

There are other problems with this proposal. The proposal will increase the cost. Nowhere in the proposal by the government is there anything that suggests that this new review, another review, will save us money. It is just another review.

Every time politicians get involved in reviews and making proposals and considerations, the costs continue to rise. What will be the possible advantages? There may or may not be. History tells us, precedent has been set, that this is likely to cost us more money. It is a tremendous waste of the commissioners' time and our money.

Another point is the principle of openness. This needs to be dealt with openly. It needs to be seen to be open. It needs to be seen to be fair. It needs to be seen to be impartial. All of those things have been thwarted by this bill. This bill is a behind the scenes, I know better than you do attitude that we have seen, as we talked earlier in question period about business as usual. Instead of bringing this out for open discussion, instead of give and take on the floor of the House of Commons, instead of even bringing forward specific proposals, what we find here instead is a process that says: "We know best. Not only do we know best, we are not willing to allow opposition members to raise their concerns to their own liking. We are going to invoke closure".

I wonder when this government handed the new shoes to Mr. Martin if the new shoes were to step on this, to squelch any ideas of democracy—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Order. I would just like to remind members to refer to one another according to the positions being held by the respective members and not their names.

**Mr. Strahl:** Mr. Speaker, I stand corrected and I will make no further reference to the boots.

However it does appear that taking the boots to some of these representations appears to be the purpose of this bill. While I originally prepared a 20 minute presentation detailing the entire pros and cons of a review process, I find now that it has unfortunately been reduced to 10 minutes because of this idea that closure somehow is in the best interest of democracy.

I think I need to summarize it in this way, since I have been restricted in my time. First, this thwarts the purpose of Parliament. Parliament is not to set boundaries to just jump in when members do not like what they see. Parliament is to set up a process. The process is in place. When it continually gets put off year after year it does nothing to enhance people's impression

that this is truly a democratic and hands off process. That is the first principle, the principle that alarms me the most.

Second, as I mentioned, is this lack of proportional representation. I know the government says it is going to review it. It may have more, it may have less. Who knows what the review will come up with when the Liberals come up with these proposals? The fact is that we will go into the next election in British Columbia with fewer representatives than we deserve.

That has been going on since 1981. It appears it will go on through to the turn of the century with the same disproportionate representation that we had to go with this last time.

• (1515)

That is the second principle that is undesirable, the increased costs, the \$5 million down the drain and the fact that we will not be able to use the extensive advertising. I have with me the sheet that describes the new boundaries which was delivered through the paper system to every household in Canada. Those costs are all for naught. Many of us prepared briefs and speeches for these advertised meetings. Our work is all for naught.

The fact is it is no longer an open process but instead, when things are not going their way, the process has been cut off. Another nail in the coffin of openness. In conclusion, I have a couple of proposals that I would like to make to the government.

First of all I would ask them to reconsider this whole idea of closure. I have sheets of *Hansard* that I dug up that I do not have time to read out today. I have almost three pages in the indexes from the last Parliament. It took three pages just to list the names of the speakers on the other side of the House that rose to speak against closure and time limitation.

It is a shame that when something that should be impartial and above reproach that government members, many of whom are listed in the three index pages, have chosen instead to clamp down on democratic discussion on this judicial process. It is a shame.

I cannot believe the government would use this bill to invoke closure to stifle free speech in the House. If it were not for the time constraints of Easter coming up the government would probably go on. It is a shame that to get a holiday they are going to invoke closure and clamp down on democratic free speech.

**Mr. John Richardson (Perth—Wellington—Waterloo):** Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me to join in this debate. We have heard many strong negatives both from the government side and the opposition side about the way the revision of the federal electoral boundaries took place.

The province of Ontario is about to gain four seats. I would like to talk a bit about why I am against it. It is not to stifle free speech. The body politic of Canada should have some input into saying where the boundary changes should be made. As a consequence everyone is looking at the House as the sole