

*Supply*

As was mentioned before and was mentioned just a few moments ago by my colleague from Calgary West, we need in the House, regardless of what provinces or areas of the country we are from, more free votes in Parliament. If members are to exert influence over policy making in committees, as we have heard so much about, or in the House they must be able to demonstrate independence of thought.

Again we read articles of some members from the government side who are brave enough to stand in committee and say: "I do not think this is right. Perhaps I will vote against it". They are absolutely taken aside and told they must go along with it. They cannot give other reports. My friends on the other side are well aware of that.

We want to make sure that more free votes are allowed in Parliament. We also need a change in attitude to the confidence convention. As my friends from the government and I sat on the opposition benches in the last Parliament we heard time and time again that every piece of legislation does not need to be treated as a confidence convention. How things change, how things become so different with the stroll of about 12 or 14 feet across the aisle here.

We need a change on the part of government and party leaders that would allow members to vote as their constituents wish without bringing down the government. I certainly have assurance that I can offer on behalf of my party leader that he would be willing to give unanimous consent to the other leaders to provide that.

We also need provisions to recall MPs who have lost or betrayed the trust of their constituents. As members would know I have spoken at great length on this in the House. It seems to rattle some even now. Recall will ensure that members consult with and serve their constituents and not merely serve their party. That if anything is one thing we can do to change the attitude that Canadians have about this place.

Also we believe in holding elections every four years at predetermined dates so there would not just be something that would be helpful or productive for the government. We saw that again in the last election where it was thought that because it had that benefit it was able to call the election at what it thought was the most opportune time. Unfortunately history will show that perhaps it was a mistake.

However, if we had elections at predetermined times every four years it would eliminate all that hassle and trying to think about it and manipulating dates.

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Also we are in favour of a binding referendum on national and important constitutional and moral issues or matters that would alter the basic social fabric of the country. We have seen a referendum in the country. Naturally I was pleased with the

results of it because I was the only federal political party here that was on the no side on the Charlottetown accord.

There is nothing wrong with that, just because people in the House and the parties which they represented lost the Charlottetown accord. A great deal of good came out of that. People in my constituency, and I am sure in every other one in the country, felt that somehow they had been given real power. They were able to exercise on a ballot their view, that it was binding and that it carried the weight of the day.

Also citizens' initiatives are so important. People can put questions on a referendum ballot which will be dealt with at election time. What a marvellous sense of power. That would free up this place so that people know they have access to the House of Commons and not just somebody who will stand in a public place regularly, as I have heard, and say: "My opinion is important. My constituent's opinion is important but when it comes to the vote I will decide". Nothing could be more arrogant or any further from the truth. If we are going to democratize this place that is something that is absolutely essential.

All Reformers have advocated Senate reform. We are talking about a triple-E Senate, elected by the people, equal provincial representation, thereby making it effective in representing regional interests. There may be people from Quebec and Ontario, the two big provinces, who say they have more senators and so they have absolute power of majority in the Senate. It is important that each province realize it is one of ten equal children in Confederation.

There seems to be no reason in my mind to justify the fact that my province of Alberta has 6 senators and that Quebec and Ontario would have 24. There is something wrong with the mathematics in that. We believe Quebec is important in Confederation. Let us turn the other place around.

I have heard many of my colleagues talk about the fact that we need to abolish the other place. We have seen very recently that the Senate is important, that it is essential. Its decision to reject Bill C-18, the suspending of the operation of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act, is a good example of the Senate's sober second look at bad legislation. Bad it was, and we would hear from members of the government side perhaps that it was bad, such interventions were rare, granted, and usually not welcome because of the unelected nature of the Senate.

I proved my point. Because Canada is a federation of equal provinces this reality should be reflected in that other place because it does provide a function. We think that if it were that much more legitimate it would provide a bigger and better function on behalf of poor legislation and as a counterweight to some of the things that come out of the House of Commons.