

I will not deal with Motion No. 6 now but will do so when we come to it, Mr. Speaker.

One of the main arguments the Government used in saying that we did not want to see the membership of the House increased to 310 seats in 1981, to 343 in 1991 and to 369 as a result of the census in 2001 was the need to control the costs of the House of Commons.

In making his presentation before committee, the Government House Leader indicated that it would be better if we looked at the McGrath committee's report, the committee which reported on the reform of the House of Commons. He said that a better utilization of the resources we had for the House which would have to be used to pay for the increased costs as a result of a larger House, would be to give it to the present as well as the new Members of the House who would be here as a result of redistribution. In other words, present Members of the House would be given better resources to do their jobs. This is in line with the recommendations of the McGrath committee, which I support, but I am not sure that that is what will happen.

The new Government has been sitting for over a year now and we are still waiting for some increase in our principal budgets. We are still waiting for some indication that the resources will be available to Members of Parliament to take on the ever-growing responsibilities that we are being given as we move into a system which I think is the system we want. Members of Parliament will be more responsible and will be in a situation to make amendments in committees which will be accepted by the Government. Members of Parliament will be more responsible in terms of dealing with government expenditures, something about which the Auditor General reminded us so effectively in the last few weeks.

I would like to see, along with the passage of this legislation, that we have some commitment from the Government that the resources for the House of Commons are not spent on increasing enormously the number of Members in the House. Those resources should be spent on existing Members to make it possible for us to do a better job in terms of research, looking at the statement of the Auditor General, looking at the expenses of Parliament, proposing legislation ourselves and investigating and amending government legislation. Those resources should actually come, not just be talked about in a general way.

● (1210)

In summary, the amendments of the Government have helped improve the legislation in many ways. Actually, it is much stronger than the legislation which was passed in 1974, in terms of looking after the problems of community of interest and of ridings of large geographic size. However, I cannot fully support it because in the long run, based on the 1991 census and following ones, we run the risk of not protecting the interests of provinces with fast growing populations.

Representation Act, 1985

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, is the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Hnatyshyn) in a position to give a commitment whereby—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Before the Hon. Member for Davenport (Mr. Caccia) goes any further, I should like to remind him that this is not a question and answer period. If the Hon. Member for Davenport has a question which he would like to put to the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Hnatyshyn), perhaps he could mention it and the President of the Privy Council, if he wishes, could answer the question when he addresses another motion.

Mr. Caccia: I will abide by your ruling, Mr. Speaker, and put it in the form of a concern, to which eventually the President of the Privy Council could respond at the right moment.

I should like to express some thoughts with regard to Clause 2. I fully subscribe to the principles which are being applied in northern Ontario and the importance of defending the democratic process, taking into account distances and sparsely populated areas. At the same time, when it comes to Metropolitan Toronto, we have the opposite situation where we have high densities in smaller areas. In addition, we have an ongoing dynamic of a population which includes people who are not citizens but are in the process of becoming Canadian citizens, therefore increasing the numbers of electors.

I express more than just the hope that the increase in seats in Ontario will mean an increase in Metro Toronto, so as to take into account the population, as well as the dynamic to which I have referred, as part of a feature which is typical of a large metropolitan area, as is the case in Metro Toronto. I suspect that the same would apply to Montreal, Winnipeg and Vancouver.

I am sure the President of the Privy Council is aware of these facts, but I wanted to ensure that they were on the record. I look forward to his comments at the appropriate moment.

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, I come from a region of the country where there are considerable distances between communities. My part of the country in northern Ontario is experiencing, at the moment, a declining population. I suggest to the Government that we do not need less representation from northern Ontario. Because of its many problems, we need to ensure that we maintain the present level of representation.

I know that the argument will be that Ontario's representation in the House is being increased by four Members. When they get through with the readjustment in Ontario, it may very well be that northern Ontario could lose up to two seats. In fact, not only would there be a loss of two seats, but the realignment of the remaining population would increase the geographic distances even more.

When the last Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Commission undertook a study, lo and behold, it came into the Sudbury basin and moved communities like Garson and