

Government Orders

This morning, we voted against a motion. I hope that you will understand what we on this side of the House were against was the rather high-handed way in which they decided to end this debate. Certain parliamentary principles are dear to us, whether we are independentists or angry federalists, and wanting to cut off discussion and debate on a subject like redistribution which is important for many people is something that my party and I could not support, you understand, and that is why we voted against it. But tonight, for the reasons I explained to you, of course we will support the motion of the party in power, which is a motion from a party that understands things, which sees the obvious and knows that the Canadian federation as it now exists probably does not have much longer to live.

Based on the poll I have here, which is encouraging for my political option, we realize that the strongest bastions of federalism in the Eastern Townships have been shattered like toothpicks, so that is encouraging for my party and me.

With that, I tell you that I will vote on second reading of this Bill C-18 for extending the mandate, that is for postponement, like my colleagues who spoke before me.

[English]

Mr. John Bryden (Hamilton—Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure to take part in this debate. I found it very interesting. All the various parties contributed to it. I would like to take it though in a slightly different direction, in a media direction that reflects my background somewhat.

Let me first describe my riding very briefly. My riding is Hamilton—Wentworth. It is a large, rural, suburban and urban riding that surrounds Hamilton. It follows the old historic lines of Wentworth county. It has a basic shape, a community centre and a community of interest going back well over 100 years.

• (1815)

There is one corner of my riding, the far southeast corner, Binbrook. It is a village with some farms immediately around it. After the writ was dropped I did a door to door campaign in Binbrook, about five days into the election. I was surprised to discover as I went from door to door that many people did not know who the candidates were. They did not know my name. They did not know the name of the Reform Party candidate. They did not know the name of the Conservative candidate.

I was quite surprised by this. I reflected upon it and asked questions. I discovered that the problem in this one small corner of my riding was that they were not served by a weekly newspaper. They are on the far edge of the circulation of the major daily newspaper which is the *Hamilton Spectator* which is in the centre of downtown Hamilton.

Again they are on the fringe of radio coverage. Finally, their basic interest was directed not toward Hamilton but directed toward another community outside of my riding, Stoney Creek and down toward the peninsula.

I realized then how absolutely essential it is for a politician to have a media which serves him because no matter what we do in this House or what we do in our lives for that matter, we have to reach the public. The public has to know what we do, whether it is good or bad, and I certainly hope that if it is good it does know. So the media is very important.

The rest of my riding is very well served. There are three weekly newspapers in various blocks of the suburban and urban portion. Of course the majority of the riding receives the *Hamilton Spectator* and there are two AM radio stations and some FM stations as well. I am very well covered as far as the ability of the media to follow my actions.

This redistribution however changes this picture entirely and it is a great problem. What has happened to my riding under the new redistribution proposal has taken out the urban component. As my riding is presently constituted I have about 30,000 people in Hamilton Mountain. They are completely eliminated. Instead what I have are two new blocks added, one a rural block next to Cambridge and another block between Cambridge and Brantford. To be more precise the one block is near Guelph.

Let me just visualize it for you, Mr. Speaker. You have Hamilton, Guelph, Cambridge and Brantford and the new rural blocks are in between those two areas.

These new blocks would be a great problem for me if this redistribution were to go ahead because they do not receive the *Hamilton Spectator*, they do not have weekly newspapers that serve them in the same way as my immediate community newspapers and they are out of range of the television and radio stations that are based in Hamilton.

Instead they turn to other communities. Naturally being rural communities they look to their nearest urban centre. So the block called Puslinch looks to Guelph. The block called north Dumfries looks to Cambridge and the block I would call south Dumfries looks to Brantford.

I am sure that you can see, Mr. Speaker, the problem that is presented here. If I say something in this House that is of some importance my chances of getting reported not only in the community and daily newspapers centred on Hamilton, but also in the *Cambridge Reporter*, the *Guelph Mercury* and the *Brantford Expositor* are very difficult.

In fact, those three newspapers that serve the rural areas that we are talking about only form a very small portion of the circulation of those newspapers. There is a great difficulty for me to get any kind of message out into these rural areas by the news media.