

*The Senate*

compared to, I believe, Prince Edward Island's population of 120,000—

**Mr. Gass:** 128,000.

• (1710)

**Mr. Darling:** The Hon. Member for Malpègue (Mr. Gass) states that the population is approximately 128,000.

When one considers the population in the Yukon and in the Northwest Territories, which is considerably less, I think you will agree that this motion should not carry as it is.

In view of that, I am pleased to present the following amendment:

That the motion (M-18) of Mr. Taylor seconded by Mr. McCuish, be amended by deleting all the words after "new Senate" and by adding the following words:

"after referring to a Conference of First Ministers such matters as the method of selection, the strength of representation of the provinces and territories, and the powers to be assigned thereto."

If this amendment were adopted, the amended motion would read:

That, in the opinion of this House the government should consider the advisability of introducing the appropriate measures to abolish the Senate and to create a new Senate after referring to a Conference of First Ministers such matters as the method of selection, the strength of representation of the provinces and territories, and the powers to be assigned thereto.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** We will continue the debate, and in one minute I will make a decision on whether the motion is in order.

I realize the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier) wishes me to rule immediately on it because the speech is over.

**Mr. Gauthier:** May I ask for the indulgence of the Chair. I was ready to speak on this debate, and for some reason that is still unclear to me, some Members did not wish me to speak at this time.

I wish to read the amendment carefully before speaking to it. It has an impact, and it does have some importance. This is Private Members' Hour, therefore, we on this side have not been duly recognized. The last five speakers were from the Tory Party. I was not being unreasonable by standing in my place hoping to be recognized.

I do wish to give you time to look at the motion, decide whether it is appropriate and in order. If so, I wish to have a copy sent to me immediately in order that I can address the important amendment before us.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The Chair does find the motion to be in order and will make sure that the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier receives a copy immediately.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier):** Mr. Speaker, may I say from the outset that the motion under consideration,

Motion M-18 as amended, is an interesting proposition for us in the Canadian minority. I guess I am not revealing a secret by stating publicly that I am in favour of an elected Senate, I am for a Senate which is representative of Canada, and I am for a Senate which will be elected within our federal system and which will have a very specific mandate, very definite and very clear powers which, I hope, will be distinct from ours in the House of Commons. Because I am not the first one to say so, Mr. Speaker, there have been a number of studies, commissions, special committees, for instance the Special Joint Committee on Senate Reform in January 1984, co-chaired by Senator Gildas Molgat and the Hon. Paul Cosgrove, M.P. The Pepin-Robarts Commission, the Task Force on Canadian Unity, also examined the question. The Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs under the chairmanship of Senator Carl Goldenberg released a report on this question in 1980, and generally speaking most of them were in favour of an elected Senate.

The motion calls for an elected Senate, but as I understand it, the amendment, which I do not have before me, would have us refer the whole issue to a federal-provincial conference to determine the specifics of this reform, including the method of electing the senators, their exact role, as well probably as the powers of the new Senate.

I shall be brief, Mr. Speaker, because I agree that we must act quickly in this regard, and because I am firmly convinced that the Senate must represent minority interests in this country, whether regional, linguistic or sexual, and I am thinking especially of the need for women senators, for representatives of the native people and of the many groups of new Canadians of all races and cultures who should also be represented in this elected Senate.

How can this be done? That is the problem, Mr. Speaker, and I agree with the Hon. Member that it would perhaps be appropriate to ask the first Ministers to examine this issue in depth at one of their meetings.

[*English*]

Indeed, the amendment in one swoop takes away the Triple E Senate, which I think my hon. friend, who moved the motion, believes in and strongly supports. I know for a fact that many of his western friends support a Triple E Senate, which is effective, elected, and equal. We could debate those three points logically and rationally in the House and what we mean by equal representation, effective representation, and the manner in which the Senate is to be elected. The whole process of election by province is a problem in itself.

My friend from Parry Sound alluded to the imbalance in population. Would the question of equal representation be based on population, or would it be strictly on a provincial basis? The Hon. Member who moved the motion made the strong recommendation that we ask the Government to consider the advisability of introducing the appropriate measures to abolish the Senate and replace it.