

In the case of Saskatchewan, I do not think it is too difficult. Where we have 11 ridings, we need to have some formula by which we are going to make sure the representation is fair.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The time for questions and comments is now terminated. Resuming debate.

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, I am particularly pleased to speak on the amendment moved by my colleague, the Hon. Member for Saint-Denis (Mr. Prud'homme), on Bill C-74. As the House will recall, I had a chance to speak on this Bill last week on the motion by the Government to invoke closure on discussion and debate in this House. I felt at that time that it was very fundamental to my work as a Member of Parliament on behalf of my constituents of York West to rise in my place and voice not only my objections but the objections I have received from my constituents.

I am pleased to rise on the amendment which is before the House for debate this afternoon, namely, that we take Bill C-74 and move it back into committee. I think there is a feeling—and it was shown quite well over the last number of days—that Members of Parliament are not entirely pleased with the process which has taken place on such a fundamental piece of legislation. We must look at this piece of legislation with all the objectivity that we in this Chamber can muster because it is fundamental to the way Canadians will be governed and to the way Canadians choose their elected representatives.

We have in this Chamber, as you know, Mr. Speaker, 282 Members of Parliament. The last boundary commission proposed an increase from 282 Members of Parliament to 310. Bill C-74 rejects the previous discussions and public hearings which took place from one coast to the other and put a capping on the number of seats at 295. The feeling I have is that there was too much haste and too much partisanship in the way that figure was arrived at. We had a good illustration of that this morning in terms of one Member from Saskatchewan on the government side talking to another Member of Parliament from Saskatchewan who happens to be a member of the New Democratic Party. It was a fair exchange. It was an exchange which indicated that if we cannot get more seats in Saskatchewan, perhaps we can consider, as a way of offsetting that, ways of beefing up the travelling privileges of Members of Parliament from Saskatchewan, or we can beef up the constituency allocations for Members of Parliament for Saskatchewan. Perhaps we can have more than one constituency office with more than one or two staff members.

It was a fair exchange between the Members of Parliament, and that is the kind of exchange that we on this side of the House are asking for. We are asking that that type of exchange be allowed to percolate through the system. We believe that the ideas and aspirations of Canadians can complement that percolation. That is what parliamentary debate is all about and that is what committee work is all about. We try to grasp these ideas, and other ideas, and mould them in such a fashion that all Canadians and all Members of Parliament

can feel that the regions are being dealt with in a fair and equitable manner.

That is not the case now. What the Government is attempting to do is to forgo the fermentation of those ideas. It says: "Somehow we know what is right for Canadians. Out of the blue we will grab 295 seats, and that is what we are running with". I would submit, and my Party has been submitting, that that is not the way to proceed. We heard from my colleague, the Hon. Member for Cochrane-Superior (Mr. Penner), on how Bill C-74 is going to affect Ontario. Under the Bill, the number of seats in Ontario will be increased from 95 to 99. This is a reduction from the proposal in the last Parliament for an increase to 105. I, of course, had a particular interest in the elegantly presented remarks of the Hon. Member for Cochrane-Superior concerning this change because I am a Member from Ontario.

● (1200)

One area which will be a loser is Metropolitan Toronto. Looking at the previous proposal, the number of seats in Toronto surely would have been greater than what this Government is prepared to give. I have some reservations about that because my constituents have some reservations. One of the issues the Government introduced to justify Bill C-74 was the savings involved because of the cost of elected representatives, their offices and staff. Yet, at the other end of the spectrum, we have the bank bail-out and no one on the Government side suggests that it was a waste of money. This is a double standard. More important, how did the Government come to this conclusion concerning the saving of money? I have talked to the Hon. Member for Cochrane-Superior and the Hon. Member for Algoma (Mr. Foster). They were Members in the last Parliament when I was not. They were very closely associated with the entire process of boundary realignment. They suggested to me that Canadians who appeared at the public hearings really did not object to an increase in Members from 282 to 310. Had they told me that there was much public animosity over the projected increases, that Canadians were not prepared to support an enlarged Parliament, then I would not get up in my place and suggest that we should not pay attention to those beliefs. However, that is not what they said. The discussions, in fact, were over how best to split up the 310-piece pie. These people did not object to the over-all increase. That is important because this Government is attempting to justify this Bill on a premise I believe to be false.

Another aspect of the debate over increasing the size of the House of Commons are the signals Canadians sent concerning what they want in their elected Chambers. I can tell you what constituents in York West want. I am not suggesting that my riding is an exact mirror of Canada, but I think the aspirations of my constituents as they presented them to me can be associated with those of other constituencies across this country. In a growing impersonalized world, a world which somehow does not have time for the individual, a world that somehow forgets the human element, Canadians are telling me