

Government Orders

self-serving and they see that maybe they stand to lose their ridings.

I have mentioned I am one of those people. Beaver River as we know it now and as we love it stands to be eliminated under the current process. If we are typical politicians therefore, of all people I should probably be self-serving and say that I am going to lose my riding and I am going to hang on to it just as hard as I can. No.

The public is saying: "Let us go to those public hearings. Let us make representation. Let us voice some of our concerns with this current process. Let us not just slam the thing shut". If we are looking at how democratic that really is surely to goodness that is the farthest thing from true democracy.

Before I get into some of the things I heard during my spring tour when I was home, some of the concerns that people have about this process, let me just say it is so frustrating to watch this matter unfold from the inside out. We are looking at something which is going to go to the other place and get thumped through there as quickly as possible. It does make one nervous.

I know it makes many government members nervous as well. It is sad to say the lid has been put on them too in saying: "Oh no, just let those members talk about it". Talk about it we will because it is something that needs to be talked about. We say if there are going to be public hearings let them go ahead. Let the public be heard on this.

In my constituency over the last couple of weeks I conducted my full spring tour of town hall meetings and many other meetings. Following are some of the things I heard.

• (1055)

They are concerned about the process as it is in place now. Let us call it the old process. There are frustrations with it. It is not perfect. However, they are willing to take their lumps and go through the procedures that are set up and put in place. If it is public hearings they must go to, then it is public hearings they will go to. If that is their chance on providing input according to the Constitution and the way this has been carried out for years and years regarding redistribution and limits, then they will do it because that is the process set in place. They are willing to abide by those rules and regulations.

Any number of people asked me again and again: "When are the hearings scheduled for this area, Deborah?" There is concern that they will be at one o'clock in the afternoon when most good people are busy about their day's work. They do have frustrations about that.

Let me assure you they have far more reservations and frustrations about something which is going to be thrown in place. Over and above that, to put the kibosh on this particular process and waste the \$5 million that has already been spent to have politicians come up with something better?

I mentioned this in second reading. If you think there are fingerprints on the present process let me assure you there are bigger and blacker fingerprints on any process that will come up as a result of Bill C-18. I can guarantee that because I know exactly what it is that people are feeling. Government members know this and feel it as well.

Many people were pleased that the whole matter will be put on ice. I must say the people in the constituency of Beaver River appreciate it. They like the name. It is a generic name for an area that has any amount of history. I know there is a Beaver River in Ontario as well. My friend and I have talked about that.

Beaver River is a significant area in northeastern Alberta. The voyageurs and the water runners went up the Beaver River and portaged a few miles across to the Athabasca River and then went up north. Historically it is an incredibly exciting area of northeastern Alberta. The best part of its being called Beaver River is that it is an area and not a particular place. There is a store and a little community of Beaver River, but it is a waterway we are looking at and an area with history attached to it.

The new name of this constituency will be Vegreville—St. Paul, if and when the old goes through, if the government for some fluke does not manage to push C-18 through. Who knows what will happen in the other place and whether Bill C-18 will really go through or not.

Looking at the old process, the way it is going right now, if Beaver River is eliminated the new constituency will be called Vegreville—St. Paul. Let me reiterate what I heard from people on my spring tour, for example the mayor of Bonnyville which is north and east of St. Paul, far north and east of Vegreville, and people in the community of Grand Centre—Cold Lake which is far north and east again of Bonnyville. As soon as you pick a place, i.e., Vegreville—St. Paul, people in those communities say: "Let us assure you, there is life beyond St. Paul".

People have real concerns about the name. They want to know why it is that a particular town or a couple of towns are named. I see their point. They make that point well. Let us look at an area rather than singling out one or two towns. I appreciate their viewpoints. I am committed to doing everything I can, whether it is under the old process or the new, to say this is a region, an area. We have gifts. We have abilities in this particular area. Maybe it is wiser yet to celebrate the fact of an area or a group rather than zeroing in on one or two towns. As soon as one town is named then somewhere else is omitted. They are worried about that.

People question why these particular boundaries. Of course the government benches would say it was a Tory mapmaker. Maybe it was but I have no knowledge of that. I do know they were appointments to the commission from the Speaker of the House. However what about Liberal mapmakers? Could there be such a thing as a Liberal cartographer in this country, heaven