

Representation Act, 1985

There shall be assigned to each of the provinces a number of members equal to the number obtained by dividing the total population of the provinces by two hundred and seventy-nine and by dividing the population of each province by the quotient so obtained, counting any remainder in excess of 0.50 as one after the said process of division.

This is the cancellation of a fundamental principle that has prevailed in Canadian Confederation since its very beginning. This is a declaration that the House of Commons shall contain about 280 Members and that the total population of the country shall be divided simply by the number 279 to arrive at a figure which will then be divided into the population of each of the provinces. Of course, in the next stage will come the further nuances which will be necessary to make the system work.

I marvel that a Government with the kind of strength it has in the Province of Quebec—or is it actually strength—would do a thing like that. I would say that a preceding Conservative Government, the one of 1957 to 1963 led by the Right Hon. John George Diefenbaker, was not known for having very much sensitivity to the aspiration of Quebec. To have had the Diefenbaker Government do a thing like this would not have astonished me at all. However, it seems quite astonishing that this Government would change the cornerstone of our system of representation which is based on the Province of Quebec and replace it with a numerical system which has one concern alone and that is to hold down the growth of the Canadian Parliament.

This concern over the growth of the House of Commons is supposedly based on the cost involved in increasing the size of the House of Commons. This leads us to wonder whether the expenditures we incur in representing our constituents are regarded as wasted money. If we were to facilitate the representation of people in isolated communities and make it easy for the citizens who live in my riding to be in touch with me, would it be money wasted? It seems to me that at some point, we would gain to move toward tyranny. What Conservative Members said many a time about the application of closure by the preceding Liberal Government is what Conservative Government members are in fact on the brink of doing. When they suggest that money spent for additional Members of Parliament who would provide good representation in money lost, they are not very far away from saying that all of our deliberations are rather a waste of money. I recognize, however, that that may be a long way away.

There have been seven impositions of closure in just a few weeks on matters that have had precious little debate in the House of Commons. We have a small Opposition which is using a six month hoist motion in order to renew its opportunity to debate these matters and keep them before the public so that we may discover whether or not the people of Canada are critical of measures the Government wants to put through. We see Government members reacting to these attempts to keep matters before the Canadian public in this way even though they themselves are past masters at it. When we see this Government, which has been in office only 15 months and

some days, acting in this kind of high-handed and authoritative manner, then surely everything Government members ever said to the last Liberal Government about tyrannical tendencies is fairly enough applied to them.

The consideration of fundamental changes to our Constitution is being pushed through by closure. This is happening because Government members seem to think that, somehow or other, adding to the number of Members of the House will waste the money of the public. At the same time, the Government presumes to sweep away the work already done by commissions and to spend more money developing redistribution that results from its feelings. What is one to say about a Government that behaves that way?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): When Orders of the Day are called later on this day, the Hon. Member for Thunder Bay-Nipigon (Mr. Epp) will have five minutes left in his debate and ten minutes left for questions and comments.

It being one o'clock, I do now leave the chair until two o'clock this day.

At 1 p.m. the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S.O. 22

[*Translation*]

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

LOCATING OF TOYOTA PLANT IN ONTARIO—ALLEGATIONS OF PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OF MINISTER OF STATE (TRANSPORT)

Mr. Carlo Rossi (Bourassa): Mr. Speaker, the Quebec caucus of the Conservative Party seems to be getting more ineffective by the day, as we hear more about the unfortunate exploits of these powerless unknowns.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to share with the House some comments allegedly made by the Minister of State for Transport (Mrs. Blais-Grenier) at the official opening of the indoor parking garage at Dorval Airport, the same day it was announced that Toyota had decided to set up its plant in Ontario.

The Minister of State for Transport indicated that she had been aware for some time that Toyota would be going to Ontario. If that was the case, why didn't she say so to her caucus? Why didn't she say so to the Hon. Member for La Prairie (Mr. Jourdenais), who had people's hopes raised when he promised that Toyota would be coming to Brossard? Why did she let the Conservative caucus move its unanimous resolution to bring Toyota to Quebec, if she had already known for some time that Toyota was going to Ontario?