

If senators are opposed to this bill, then they must exercise their conscience and vote against it. It is neither appropriate nor parliamentary to hide behind a committee and refuse to allow the ultimate in parliamentary procedure — the vote of the whole Senate chamber — to take place. I urge honourable senators to support this motion, which does not have the effect of passing the bill. However, it will force the committee to report to this chamber, and honourable senators can then vote on the bill as conscience dictates.

• (1550)

Honourable senators should remember that this bill is a House of Commons bill, as are most of the bills we receive. However, this one is special because it does not affect us. It affects Members of Parliament. It is the first time since 1963 that the process has been overhauled. It was not a government process but a committee process.

If we act quickly, as we were informed this morning, it is likely that the next election will be fought on new boundaries. If we continue to delay, I suggest that so too, perhaps, will the House of Commons, and new boundaries will not be put into place. An all-party committee of the House of Commons has urged us to get on with it. I do not suggest we get on with it, I simply suggest we vote on it.

Hon. Consiglio Di Nino: Honourable senators, I should like to take this opportunity to make a brief intervention on this subject.

For those in this chamber who do not know who Elbridge Gerry was, please allow me to put on the record the reason why his place in history is assured. Mr. Gerry was a signatory to the Declaration of Independence and he was Governor of Massachusetts in the early nineteenth century. He was not above being party to a little questionable manipulation to achieve his goals. Mr. Gerry was a rabid Jeffersonian, and in the election of 1812, the Massachusetts electoral map was redrawn to favour Jeffersonian candidates. I would like to believe this is why Canadians and Americans fought the war of 1812, but obviously that is not the case. After Mr. Gerry's changes, the map was so contorted that it looked like a salamander. As I understand it, that is how the term "gerrymandering" came about.

Honourable senators, we have all heard the comments of Mr. Sarkis Assadourian, MP for the Ontario riding of Don Valley North, the gentleman to whom Senator Lynch-Staunton referred a few moments ago. If we succumb to the Chrétien government's pressure to pass this bill, we can then immortalize Mr. Assadourian, and Canada will have its own term when referring to future manipulations of electoral boundaries. The term will be "sarkising."

The Hon. the Speaker: Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Senators: Yes.

Some Hon. Senators: No.

The Hon. the Speaker: Will those honourable senators in favour of the motion please say "yea"?

[Senator Carstairs]

Some Hon. Senators: Yea.

The Hon. the Speaker: Will those honourable senators opposed to the motion please say "nay"?

Some Hon. Senators: Nay.

The Hon. the Speaker: In my opinion, the "nays" have it.

And two honourable senators having risen:

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, pursuant to the order of your honourable house, this vote will be deferred until five thirty o'clock this afternoon.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

SPECIAL COMMISSION ON RESTRUCTURING OF THE RESERVES—REPORT REFERRED TO SOCIAL AFFAIRS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

Hon. B. Alasdair Graham (Deputy Leader of the Government), pursuant to notice of November 20, 1995, moved:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology be authorized to examine the Report of the Special Commission on the Restructuring of the Reserves, tabled in the Senate on November 7, 1995;

That the committee present its final report no later than January 15, 1996; and

That, notwithstanding usual practices, if the Senate is not sitting when the final report of the committee is completed, the committee shall deposit its report with the Clerk of the Senate, and said report shall thereupon be deemed to have been tabled in this Chamber.

The Hon. the Speaker: Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

[*Translation*]

FIREARMS BILL

CONSIDERATION OF REPORT OF COMMITTEE—
DEBATE SUSPENDED

On the Order:

Resuming the debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Beaudoin, seconded by the Honourable Senator Grimard, for the adoption of the sixteenth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs (Bill C-68, an Act respecting firearms and other weapons, with amendments), presented in the Senate on Monday, November 20, 1995.