

*Government Orders*

In our positions as members of this great House, the very cradle of our democracy, we are in positions of great power. We are the legislators. We have the ability to change laws. Nothing makes Canadians more cynical than to see people being put in these positions of power and then abusing that power when ordinary Canadians do not have the opportunity of using that power to their own ends. That is precisely what is happening with this bill.

In recent years Canadians have become increasingly displeased with Parliament. They have expectations as to how public servants should conduct themselves. They become very cynical when they see politicians attempting to manipulate the system for their own personal gain.

• (1330)

There is only one way for Canadians to interpret the passage of this bill. They must conclude that once again the politicians in Ottawa are circumventing due process, a process that most agree is fair and unbiased, for their own gain.

When we all came to this House in January we were talking about conducting ourselves differently in the 35th Parliament. We talked about moving away from the practices previous governments and members engaged in.

Canadians want to believe this. It is therefore vitally important that we back up what we are talking about now through our deeds rather than through our words. Many members are unhappy with the changes that the commission has proposed. Some fear these will impact on their future electoral prospects. Looking at it objectively, the displacement is felt by all parties and virtually all members. No one party or individual was singled out.

As I said earlier, many members on this side of the House will be severely impacted if the current boundary proposals are adopted. Yet we maintain that the process must be allowed to continue and that those who are unhappy with the commission's proposals can make representations within the parameters that the process establishes, rather than voting in favour of this motion out of concern for their own personal political considerations.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** The member has exceeded his time.

**Ms. Mary Clancy (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration):** Madam Speaker, may I say that I am really very pleased to take part in this debate. I am particularly pleased to take part following my friend from the Reform Party—I am sorry but I do not know his riding—because there are a few home truths that need to be brought up here.

Let us talk about some of the things that our constituents want us to do. First of all it is true that there are in some places, in some ridings in the country, people who are greatly dissatisfied

with their representation. It is also true that there are some 70-plus of us in this House—this is not to denigrate in any way any of the new members from any party—who did get re-elected and got elected quite handily with quite large majorities.

In my riding, so that members will know where I am coming from on this, I won every poll but one. Some polls had not been won by a Liberal since Confederation.

In the riding next to me, and these are the two ridings that would be affected should redistribution take place, the same thing happened. The hon. member for Halifax West and I were both very gratified that we won by very large majorities at every poll. I believe the hon. member for Halifax West took every single poll in his riding and, as I said, I lost one. It was certainly remiss of me and I will try not to do it again.

The point I am making is that the reason for this bill, it must be stated here and now, has nothing to do with the worry about boundaries changing and causing problems in the traditional gerrymander, if you will, that ridings are being changed and we might lose them.

With the greatest of respect, I know the member of the Reform Party who is the sole member of his party from Ontario could say that Liberals in the province of Ontario are not particularly worried about the electoral losses of moving boundaries. What we are worried about—I am astounded that we do not have the support of the Reform Party on this—is the cost of increasing the number of members of Parliament to the public purse.

There are 295 of us in a country of 27 or 28 million people. Look at the representation in the House of Representatives in the United States yet they appear to manage their representation very well. In these days when restraint is being urged on us by all fronts, not the least of these urgings coming from the Reform Party members across the way, should we really be considering increasing the number of members of Parliament? I am almost at a loss for words, which I can assure my hon. friend in the Reform Party is not something that happens very often.

• (1335)

**Mr. White (Fraser Valley West):** We noticed that.

**Ms. Clancy:** I am sure you did. You may learn from it too.

Consider the fact that members of the Reform Party think we need more members of Parliament. It is unquestionably true that there are certain members for whom a lack of redistribution is creating a difficulty. I refer to my very good friend, the parliamentary secretary to the minister of human resources who has, as I understand it, the largest and most populous riding in the country. I believe that the parliamentary secretary's riding will soon hit a population somewhere in the vicinity of 300,000.

My own riding has a population of somewhere in excess of 100,000 which is larger than it should be. There are many ridings, particularly urban ridings, where this happens and it will be difficult for urban members. It may well be that we are