

Senator Ghitter, on April 21, 1994, stated:

Personally, I would have no difficulty with amendments that would allow the bill to go forward, on the understanding that all the work that has been done already by the commissions will not be lost, and also on the understanding that by the time a new election comes about, there will be new boundaries.

Finally, on the same day, Senator Lynch-Staunton stated:

We have absolutely no objection to a full parliamentary review of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act, as long as the next federal election is based on electoral boundaries arising out of the 1991 census.

Honourable senators, Bill C-69 achieves each and every one of those objectives. I hope that we will come back to this house with an order for its speedy passage.

Senator Murray: Perhaps the honourable senator would permit one question. With regard to the consensus in the House of Commons, is Senator Carstairs aware that the message which we received at the eleventh hour on June 21 from the House of Commons had to be rammed through that chamber using closure? Some consensus!

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marcel Prud'homme: Honourable senators, I would not want to repeat all the speeches I have made on this issue.

[*English*]

It is to Senator Fairbairn that I should like to make a concrete proposal. While we deliberate time is ticking away. Personally, I feel like Warren Allmand. He cannot come to terms with undoing what he thought we did well under the Pearson and Trudeau governments. I cannot come to terms with undoing what was done by Mr. Pearson. I was there when what was known as the gerrymandering was taking place. Some honourable senators shared that experience.

So be it. However, something is very disturbing. We know now that the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada tabled his eleventh report at 3:12 p.m. on the day on which he was supposed to table his report.

I do not know in what Bill C-69 will result. That is why I was careful last week not to say where I stood in regard to Bill C-69. Does it exist or not? If I had taken a position, the comments Senator Carstairs made a minute ago could well have been

addressed to me. How can one speak to something that does not exist?

I wish to say to the government whip, his colleagues and all those who have friends in the government that since last week a deadline has been in place. If Bill C-69 is supposed to die here in the Senate, then members of the other place will have to prepare themselves for a big surprise. I worked on these committees for 30 years.

From the tabling of the report in the House, members have 30 days in which to give notice that they intend to make an ultimate representation. Among the regulations attached to this condition is the proviso that any member can make representation to the committee that will sit when the House sits. That takes into account another 30 days.

However, the first 30 days is now ticking. Any member who wants to make a representation must have the signature of 10 members of the House of Commons. For example, one might say, "I disagree with the electoral map of New Brunswick."

May I say to my esteemed colleague from New Brunswick that I was disturbed when I read the strong minority report made by one of the New Brunswick commissioners involving the loss of a seat to francophone New Brunswickers? This is dramatic.

Honourable senators, I should like to explain this issue once again clearly because I am sure I was not too clear the first time. The Speaker of the House of Commons has received the eleventh report. In the 30 days following the tabling of the report, any member can make an appeal to the committee that will sit when the House sits.

In the past I followed all the rules. I went to court. I went to the committee. I went to the committee on behalf of others. I won some and I lost some.

Let us say that I am a person from New Brunswick and I am unhappy with the map. As one member of the House I must obtain the signatures of any 10 members from any province and state, "I intend to appeal when that committee sits, but there are only 30 days as of last week."

I am afraid that if something bad happens to Bill C-69, members will take their chance. They have nothing to lose. If there is a new bill, if Bill C-69 is okay or if Bill C-69 passes, then they have lost but a few moments of their precious time having said that they intend to go to a committee to make an ultimate representation.

When the House reconvenes in September, they will have to listen to the views expressed by these people who gave notice within the 30 days starting last week.