

other kind of pressure inhibit our effort at reform. We have to try.

In closing I take a moment to remind my colleagues in the House that there is a big, fast moving and exciting world beyond these walls. In my brief experience in this House I am often amazed at how this simple fact gets lost in the daily shuffle of papers this institution is confronted with. We often get distracted from some of our major causes or our major concerns. However we have to recognize there is another world out there where they are throwing around words and we are doing it in this House as well. They are words like information superhighway. We as legislators must strive to keep up and be ready for change.

• (1100)

I leave this portion of the debate with this final thought. Failure is not fatal, but in these times failure to change might be.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Is the House ready for the question?

**Some hon. members:** Question.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**An hon. member:** On division.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed.)

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## ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES READJUSTMENT PROCESS

**Hon. Allan Rock (for the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons)** moved:

That the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs be instructed to prepare and bring in a Bill, in accordance with Standing Order 68(5), respecting the system of readjusting the boundaries of electoral districts for the House of Commons by Electoral Boundaries Commissions, and, in preparing the said bill, the committee be instructed to consider, among other related matters, the general operation over the past thirty years of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act, including:

(a) an assessment of whether there should be a continual increase in the number of Members of the House of Commons after each census, as now provided in section 51 of the Constitution Act;

(b) a review of the adequacy of the present method of selection of members of Electoral Boundaries Commissions;

(c) a review of the rules governing and the powers and methods of proceedings of Electoral Boundaries Commissions, including whether these Commissions

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ought to commence their work from the basis of making necessary alterations to the boundaries of existing electoral districts wherever possible;

(d) a review of the time and nature of the involvement of the public and of the House of Commons in the work of Electoral Boundaries Commissions;

That the committee have the power to travel within Canada and to hear witnesses by teleconference; and

That the committee report no later than December 16, 1994.

**Mr. David Walker (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to rise and speak in favour of the motion to refer the issue of the electoral boundaries readjustment process to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

The current process of adjusting constituency boundaries by independent commissions has been in existence since 1964 when the Liberal government of Lester Pearson passed the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act. Before then the House of Commons itself was responsible for electoral boundaries readjustment.

The current process has been in place since 1964. After 30 years the time has come for a fundamental review of all aspects of this process by the House of Commons which passed the 1964 law in the first place.

• (1105)

On April 13, 1994 this House adopted Bill C-18. It provides for a suspension of the current electoral boundaries readjustment process for a period of 24 months in order to allow for a fundamental review of all aspects of the process. All aspects of this matter should be reviewed by the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs in a thorough and thoughtful manner.

Some dissatisfaction has been expressed with regard to the current process. I would like to take a few minutes to elaborate on this.

For example, the commissions published their initial proposals without having a chance to obtain input from interested parties. When published therefore, these proposals often come as a complete surprise.

From my former days as a political science professor at the University of Winnipeg when I followed the electoral boundaries review process in a more dispassionate way, I can tell you those in the academic community who were watching the process were indeed surprised by the results at times. They were more surprised at how difficult it was to learn in detail exactly how the new boundaries were set.

Although some commissions explain the reasons for the proposals, they are not required to do so. It is therefore very difficult for a person who intends to make representations, to intervene with a commission, to know the reasons behind the