

Private Members' Business

the House to allow this bill to be dealt with in Committee of the Whole rather than go to a legislative committee, if the hon. member wishes to do so, so that the bill can be dealt with in all stages today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is there consent? The hon. member for Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing.

Mr. Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Yes, Mr. Speaker, there is consent.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): We will commence debate and then we will go into Committee of the Whole.

On debate, the hon. member for Waterloo.

Mr. McLean: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands and members of the New Democratic Party for their collaboration.

Bill S-11 reflects a movement toward strengthening and uniting the Lutheran Church in Canada. It will not only advance the important work of Lutherans here in Canada, but also around the world through the Lutheran World Federation Service. It extends its services in co-operation with CIDA and other agencies in international development assistance around the world, as seen most recently in the independent Namibia where it has been involved in education and health care for many years.

As the member of Parliament for Waterloo, I am pleased to represent an area with a large Lutheran presence, including administrative offices and the Waterloo Lutheran Seminary. Founded by the 16th century German Protestant reformer, Martin Luther, the Lutheran Church has significant membership and support across Canada and across the United States. I am especially proud of the contributions the Lutherans have made, not only to the communities of Waterloo region, but to the development of Canada.

Today, as a Presbyterian supporting Bill S-11, which was introduced in the other place by my fellow Presbyterian, Senator Heath MacQuarrie, I speak on behalf of the Eastern Synod of the Lutheran Evangelical Church in Canada, the petitioners of this bill. The Eastern Synod represents those members who live in the province of Ontario, east of 86 degrees longitude, and in the provinces of Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland.

The bill allows the Eastern Canada Synod of the Lutheran Church in America to restructure under the name of the "Eastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada".

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada was formally organized in 1986 as a merger of the Lutheran Church of America, Canada section, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada. The Eastern Synod is the legal successor to the previous Eastern Canada Synod of the Lutheran Church in America. As such, it includes all congregations but one in Geraldton of the former Eastern Canada Synod congregations and several congregations of the former Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada.

The Eastern Synod will thus continue in the tradition of Lutheran jurisdictions in these provinces, which began with the 1884 Charter of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Canada. This body merged with the Synod of Nova Scotia in 1962, to become the Eastern Canada Synod of the Lutheran Church in America.

Bishop William Huras notes that an earlier merger in 1925 united the Synod of Central Canada, organized in 1909, to serve English speaking congregations with the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Canada, retaining the original charter of the latter. Both of these bodies served the provinces of Ontario and Quebec.

Lutheran congregations and jurisdictional units preceded these chartered bodies. For example, Zion Lutheran Church in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, was founded in 1772 and St. Peter's Cambridge in Waterloo region was founded in 1834. The first Lutheran congregation in Ontario was founded by United Empire Loyalists in 1784 in what is now Riverside Heights, Ontario.

The Eastern Synod will be the latest Lutheran jurisdiction in a noble line of Lutheran communities in this part of Canada, serving in six provinces.

Mr. Speaker, I commend to you this very helpful and useful evolution of a fine group of Christian people across Canada.

Consultations have taken place as was mentioned a moment ago, and I believe there is now a disposition to give this bill second and third readings. I think we might proceed, as appropriate, to pass this bill through all stages.