

dollars. Add six members and that is \$3 million per year. That is an annual cost of \$3 million forever. That is the financial issue.

I have not even mentioned the cost of renovating the House of Commons. Every time a piece of carpet, a wire or a pipe is installed it seems to cost us \$10,000. There just is not any more room in this House. There would have to be a significant renovation.

In any event, 301 members is not what Canadians want. They want a Parliament that works. They want to see it work with 295 members and not 301 or 310 or 320 as time goes on. In my view the position the opposition parties are taking seems to be a desire to show blind submission to a process that was put in place about 30 years ago and keeps on growing, keeps on causing the numbers of members of Parliament to grow and the costs to grow.

● (1645)

A number of the interventions today were from members of the Reform Party. I would have thought there would be some element of reform in the way they are addressing this.

I accept that the redistribution process is calculated to be fair and that it is there for a reason. But lying behind that is the growth in the numbers of MPs and I want to put a stop to that.

Yes, \$5 million has been spent on the current process. But how much more money would continue to be spend on the existing process if we did not stop it right now? If we do not stop it this month or next month we will continue to spend the rest of the \$8 million and I suspect, as per usual, it would not be a surprise to see them go away beyond budget. The process simply has to be completed.

I will tell the House why I support this bill. It is because I want to cap the growth in the number of MPs in the House. The only way to do it is to grab hold of this process and stop it dead right now. Put it on ice because the changes to cap the growth in the number of members in the House involves a change in the Constitution. We do not make those overnight in this place. I do not think any country makes constitutional changes overnight.

This is the way to do it. The matter is to be referred to the procedure and House affairs committee, an all-party committee, not a Liberal mechanism as was alluded to earlier by one of the Reform Party members. It is an all-party committee and it will study the issue and report back to the House where the issue will be debated. I cannot imagine that the government would want to put closure on that debate when it comes back. However, at the moment we have to do this piece of business to stop the growth and the procedure. If we do not do this, within a year or two it is going to give us 301 MPs running in the next federal election.

Royal Assent

I will end there. I hope the message is clear. I hope some of my colleagues opposite will understand it. We will redistribute the boundaries at some point. We have to. We certainly have to in my riding. However, let us get a handle on the number of MPs that are needed to serve the country as a whole, refashion that process, refashion that mechanism first.

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MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed certain bills.

ROYAL ASSENT

[English]

The Speaker: Order. I have the honour to inform the House that a communication has been received as follows:

March 24, 1994

Mr. Speaker:

I have the honour to inform you that the Honourable Beverley McLachlin, Puisne Judge of the Supreme Court of Canada, in her capacity as Deputy Governor General, will proceed to the Senate chamber today, the 24th day of March, 1994 at 4.45 p.m. for the purpose of giving royal assent to certain bills.

Yours sincerely,

Anthony Smyth
Deputy Secretary Policy,
Programming and Protocol

● (1650)

A message was delivered by the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod as follows:

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Deputy to the Governor General desires the immediate attendance of this honourable House in the chamber of the honourable the Senate.

Accordingly, the Speaker with the House went up to the Senate chamber.

● (1700)

And being returned:

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that when the House did attend Her Honour the Deputy to His Excellency the Governor General in the Senate chamber, Her Honour was pleased to give in Her Majesty's name, the royal assent to the following bills:

Bill C-3, an act to amend the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements and Federal Post-Secondary Education and Health Contributions Act—Chapter No. 2.

Bill C-5, an act to amend the Customs Tariff—Chapter No. 3.

Bill C-14, an act to provide borrowing authority for the fiscal year beginning on April 1, 1994—Chapter No. 4.