we need a clause that allows us to expand. I understand and accept that.

The answer to population growth is not to increase the numbers of representatives in the House of Commons but to periodically redraw the boundaries and redistribute seats according to the population shifts, reapportionment.

That is representation by population and that is a very important principle. The principle that one MP can represent only 100,000 people versus 150,000, 120,000 or 200,000 is the principle I am asking the House to accept. I am challenging the House to accept more people to represent and hire more staff. Overall that would be less of a cost to the country than adding more MPs. That is representation by population. We cannot have that because the urban centres would control and rule the country. We need the balance between urban and rural areas and 10 provinces across the country with another body, with another House. It is called a Senate.

The concentration and the thrust should be a triple E Senate, an elected Senate so it has some empowerment, so it can be held accountable; an equal Senate whether in terms of so many for each province or we look at five regions, Atlantic Canada, Quebec, Ontario, the prairies and British Columbia, and have an equal number of senators on that basis. The country sadly and dearly needs regional representation.

The gun control bill was born and bred and brought to the House from the heart of Toronto by the justice minister, not reflecting the true wishes of all of Canada and all Canadians. It was pitting the rurals and urbans against each other. If we had an elected, equal and effective Senate with some powers it could send it back and say it might be good for the little heartland of Toronto and the Ontario little area there but it is not what the rest of Canada wants. Fix this bill, change it. It is not acceptable in this form.

It could not overturn money bills but on other bills in terms of effectiveness it could improve things because it would be in touch with its constituents. It would be paid to listen to those people. Why would it be accountable? It would be elected by those people and if it did not represent them its members would be kicked out. That is why an elected Senate would be effective. That is why giving the Senate some powers would be good for the country. That is why equality is important so we are fair and treat each other with respect across this land from sea to sea.

Only a triple E Senate can balance the interests of less populous provinces with those of more populous provinces in Parliament. Reformers believe the time has come to bring financial responsibility to government, not to make government bigger.

• (1110)

I plead with my fellow colleagues in the House to apply their common sense and represent the common sense of the common people and do what is in their best interest.

If we had to go from 301 to 200 or if we reduced the size of the House of Commons the people who would be here representing the country would be more effective. They would have more power. It would be more beneficial for Canadians.

Politicians have to be accountable to the people of Canada and trusted to handle their money. More faces and more people in the House sucking more money out of the purse strings will not improve the system. It will detract from the system. It will cost the country more and more money.

We all know what it is like in committees. We all know what it is like when we want to make decisions. When we want to rule by committee or draft a document by committee we all know how hard it is. We all know how hard it is to build consensus. We all know how hard it is even within our parties to get everybody to agree. Why increase the number of people we want to include in that decision making process when we know the number we have already is hard enough? Why increase the problem? Why add to the problem?

Why not fix the problem by having fewer people to make those decisions? The decisions will be better. There would be more time for debate instead of the silly games that have been played for this past week and last night starting with the government's time allocation on important bills that affect the country, basically attacking the principles of democracy by limiting the freedom of speech. We would not have to do the things we do to give ourselves the opportunity to stand up on the floor of the House to talk to the Canadian people whether they are physically here or watching on television or reading it in the paper. It would give us the opportunity to explain things. We would not have to play these games.

We all know how the structure is in here. One has to be government. Therefore the minority of the House is already neutralized. If one is not in cabinet one gets a parliamentary secretary position. If one does not get that then one gets a chairmanship of a standing committee. After that everybody else is just fill him in, do him in. The reward for attending committee work is interparliamentary travel, one of those great eight associations that will really help the country and really does the country a lot of good because we are learning, giving and establishing contacts. The people who go out there to make those contacts, those backbenchers who are meeting these people in Europe, Asia, China and France come back here and the cabinet ministers do not even talk to them. They do not even ask them what was said. There is no authority there.