

Government Orders

with the Clerk of the House. I want to thank you for having preserved this institution, which must endure.

I would also like to thank the pages and ask them not to always go by what they have seen here, should they choose a political career, but to keep the best of it. As we well know, there is good and not so good. They should forget the not so good and remember the best.

[English]

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, somehow I have an idea we may not be spending too much time here before our summer break, perhaps not tomorrow at least.

I also extend my thanks to the pages. Their decorum and support of the members have certainly been appreciated by all members of the House, definitely by my colleagues in the Reform Party. We wish them an excellent summer and a wonderful future.

I thank those who have sat in the chair, yourself, Mr. Speaker, and your colleagues. I thank the clerks who sit around the table who have helped us and all staff on the Hill for their support. I wish all members a good summer, a bit of a break, and I know they will be continuing their responsibilities even though they leave here.

Certainly we have not accomplished all we thought we would to this point in the 35th Parliament. However, we have made some progress and for that we are thankful. I give my assurance we will come back on September 18 or whenever the government House leader calls the House back to pursue our responsibility as Canada's unofficial opposition.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the NDP caucus I join in congratulating the pages, giving our thanks to them and to all servants of the House including you, Mr. Speaker, and others who have occupied the chair over the course of this Parliament and wish everyone a good summer.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSIONS

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): It is my duty, pursuant to section 21 of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act, chapter E-3, Revised Statutes of Canada, 1985, to lay upon the table certified copies of the 1994 reports of electoral boundaries commissions for all the provinces and the Northwest Territories.

Accordingly, these reports stand referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1515)

[English]

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT RETIRING ALLOWANCES ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-85, an act to amend the Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act and to provide for the continuation of a certain provision, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe mine is the last speech or close to the last speech we will be having on this issue prior to the vote later this afternoon. We will be on the MPs pension plan, the reduction in the pension plan as announced by the Liberal Party in the red book during the last election campaign. As a matter of fact, the bill on which we will be voting in about half an hour will reduce the MP pension plan benefits to an even greater degree than that which was promised in the red book.

I accept the announcement made in the red book. As the critic for government operations in my days in opposition, I contributed to writing some of these portions of the red book as well as many others that pertained to government ethics, lobbyists, contracting procedures, MP benefits and so on. Today the Liberal Party is delivering on yet another promise in the red book.

Some members across the way particularly in the Reform Party say it does not matter that is what we promised. It does not matter that it goes further. What matters to them is that we change what we are doing to suit them and they are not expected to be here for more than one term. That is essentially the crux of their argument. They are saying that MPs do not need pensions. That is their view.

Mr. Benoit: We never said that.

Mr. Boudria: The hon. member should have participated in the debate to a greater extent. There are quotes in many places where members said they did not need these pensions. I have to disagree with members who made those statements.

We have had a rather sorry spectacle. The Reform Party asked the Prime Minister point blank whether he would exempt them from that plan. The Prime Minister said yes. Then we produced the bill that did just that. The first question Reform members asked in the committee on procedure and House affairs was whether it was not unfair that the plan was designed in such a way to permit people to opt out, which is just what they asked for.