

*Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act***PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS**

[English]

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES READJUSTMENT ACTCHANGE IN NAME OF CONSTITUENCY FROM OTTAWA
EAST TO OTTAWA-VANIER

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa East) moved that Bill C-232, respecting the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act, be read the second time and referred to Committee of the Whole.

[Translation]

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am indebted to my colleagues and I thank you.

The purpose of this bill is to change the name of my electoral district to Ottawa-Vanier. This change is in order to identify better the geographic and demographic facts of my riding.

Bounded by the city of Ottawa, Vanier is included in my electoral district. The name Ottawa-Vanier will reflect more adequately the geographic fact of my riding wherein lie the two cities.

[English]

Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, within the stricture of the time limit laid down by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), I suggest that this bill has the complete support of members of my side of the House. We have always wanted riding names to be associated as closely as possible with the ridings for which they stand. In my case, in view of redistribution, I have great sympathy for that principle. I hope, if it becomes necessary for me to bring in a bill or motion with regard to my riding, that I can count on the support of the hon. member for Ottawa East (Mr. Gauthier) if he happens to be here.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, bearing in mind the time limit which has been established, may I, too, simply say that we are happy to agree to this bill. We accept the underlying principle and we join with all members in saying how pleased we are to see the name of our late, distinguished Governor General Vanier included in the name of an Ottawa riding.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and the House went into committee thereon, Mr. Boulanger in the chair.

Clause 1 agreed to.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Shall I rise and report the bill?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Bill reported, read the third time and passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): Order, please. The House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper, namely, notices of motions, private bills and public bills.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker.]

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

[English]

FINANCEREQUEST FOR COPY OF PROGRAM FORECAST BY
TREASURY BOARD INCLUDING BUDGETS A,B,X

Mr. Terry Grier (Toronto-Lakeshore) moved:

That an Order of the House do issue for a complete copy (including budgets A, B, X) of the Program Forecast (Program Review) by the Treasury Board for the latest year for which Parliament approved departmental expenditures.

He said: Mr. Speaker, on previous occasions I have advanced arguments in support of motions very similar to the one we are now considering. So far, it appears that these arguments have not found favour with government members. I want to summarize some of them quickly and introduce new evidence which I think will lend further weight to the basic proposition which underlies this motion and its companion motions. Very simply it is this: that more information must be made available to members of parliament so that they may the better discharge their fundamental responsibilities of approving government spending programs and government legislative initiatives. I contend that information provided to members of parliament—and I know this is true for members of provincial legislatures as well—by the government for the purpose of scrutinizing activities of government is very slim indeed.

In my judgment, Canadian governments have an obsessive tendency to secrecy, and operate on the principle that unless documents prepared somewhere in the bowels of the huge administration are specifically labelled as public, those documents must be regarded as being confidential. I am challenging the implicit conclusion that what parliament shall have the right to know shall be that which the government agrees to reveal. I believe it is important in a democracy like ours for the public, and for members who are representatives of the public, to be given access to more information relating to the creation of government policy, the options which were open to the government as it chose that policy and the rationale which lies behind it.

I am not arguing against all secrecy; I am not taking an extreme position. I readily concede that there are certain kinds of documents and information which it would not be in the public interest or national interest, as distinct from the government's partisan interest, to reveal. I am not suggesting, therefore, that no document should ever be withheld; however, I suggest that there are very real limits to the sacrosanctity of government material. It is quite proper and fitting that the government should recognize that members of parliament have a right to some of the information and some of the material which is compiled and accumulated at such vast expense in the public service.

● (1710)

I suggest that a lack of information seriously impedes the ability of parliament to do its job properly, its most ancient job of expressing grievance in voting supply. I have argued that in the past. I will not repeat the argument fully. In the absence of hard information, members