

interests, to ask all parliamentarians in this House to grant us 25 per cent of the seats.

We were here first, we joined the union in 1840, we decided to live together. You will lose nothing in giving us 25 per cent of the seats. It would be a nice gesture toward a nation, a people you claim you want to keep within your ranks. It seems to me that if the government wants to give an obvious sign of its love for Quebec and is serious about keeping us in Canada, it must guarantee us a 25 per cent representation.

[English]

Mr. Stinson: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I have had a question on the Order Paper for 348 days now and I am starting to wonder if I will have to wait—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member is quite entitled to raise that point, but he should raise it at a different time. Since the hon. member will not get a response at this time, I would ask him to raise that point the next time Questions on the Order Paper are discussed in the House.

Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak on the electoral boundaries issue because it relates to representation by population and, more importantly, to responsible government.

I would like to point out that the House of Commons is built on the principle of representation by population. This great country of Canada came to be not by chance, but rather by strong convictions that all people could work together for the betterment of all. Perhaps it was the right man in the right position in the 1850s and 1860s, or perhaps it was a strong determination that a dream of federalism could work, but I know that compromise played an important role in the final decision. To make responsible government work in the 1850s, before Confederation, it took a lot of people working together, in particular the compromise for trade by George Brown, a man who put his country before himself when he proposed the great coalition in 1864.

My hon. friend from Chambly spoke the other day of the French influence and what he felt was a lack of support by Reform members of this House for the French cause or French history. I want to assure my friend that Reformers are not so ignorant as to deny the history of their own country, nor to be unaware of those who shaped it from its beginnings.

To be honest, I would first have to acknowledge our aboriginal people, whose beginnings we can trace well back to before Christ. On the west coast of Canada the use of cedar gives us

many of our time clues. We can actually trace cedar growing on the west coast of B.C. to at least 3500 B.C.

Later, as Europeans came to our country's shores, they claimed the land as theirs. Does that not seem odd? So many others were already in occupation of this land. True, the first European settlements were French settlements, after Cartier's visits of 1534 and 1535. Those settlements were along the coast of Nova Scotia. In the 1604–05 settlements there was severe hardship. The hardship was due to very cold winters, the lack of fresh water, and sickness. Those settlements did not remain at that time.

Later came settlement in Quebec in 1608, as my colleagues from the Bloc have stated. That, of course, was Champlain's settlement in Quebec. As I recall, Champlain was very concerned about those in his small settlement. He wondered how to keep the morale up. His order of good cheer was to increase the morale and bring some relief and entertainment to those inhabitants who were so far from home. It is interesting to remember that many years later, Voltaire referred to New France as those few acres of snow.

• (1320)

Meanwhile, some French settlers had returned to the Acadian shores, and by 1613 these Acadians, peaceful farmers who tilled and looked after the land, really bothered no one. Yet that did not prevent the expulsion of the Acadians in 1755. Of course, they did not swear allegiance to the British crown. When they were expelled from Grand Pré, it was an injustice; it was cruel.

Does it matter now that the English at the time feared the unrest to the south in the 13 colonies, which they thought was about to explode because they knew the Americans in the 1760s protested against the unjust taxation by the English? I think they called them the "intolerable acts". We are all aware of the Boston Tea Party. Well, does it matter now? I do not think so.

Reformers are also aware of Longfellow's epic poem, "Evangeline", the immortalized young Acadian woman who spent her life in search of her lost love, only to find him as he lay dying. Let me assure the Bloc, it is part of our tragic history as well.

I watched the Anne Murray show last Friday night, dedicated to the fine music and musicians of Nova Scotia. She spoke with pride of her Acadian ancestry.

What of the 30 years following 1755? Many English, later nicknamed loyalists, fled to the 13 colonies, often to escape being tarred and feathered—peaceful, law-abiding citizens—all because they wanted to remain obedient to the English crown. Is that not odd? A few years earlier cruelties had taken place because Acadians did not want to swear allegiance to the British crown. Wrongs on both sides.