

*Government Orders*

It is quite enough that we have another House that does not work, Mr. Speaker, without having commissions that sit idle. We should minimize the damage. Maybe we could obtain unanimous consent right now to bring in a constitutional resolution to suspend the current operations and duties of the other House until such time as a new House is reconstituted, one which better reflects the aspirations of Canadians. As for Quebecers, we will deal in our own way with the problem of the second House.

● (1040)

At any rate, Bill C-18 has been tabled, although somewhat late. That is unfortunate, I must say, and the hon. Secretary of State for Parliamentary Affairs probably regrets it too, as it means that we now have to speed up our discussions a little and that a motion for time allocation had to be put forward. Why did the government not act with more diligence? Why was the bill not tabled two weeks earlier, so this situation could have been averted? I do not know why and I will not speculate on this because I would not want to ascribe malicious intent to anyone.

We find ourselves in the somewhat uncomfortable situation where provincial commissions have decided on their own authority to sit since, as the Chief Electoral Officer, Mr. Jean-Pierre Kingsley, explained in his testimony before the Committee on Procedure and House Affairs—please refer to page 13 of the Evidence of the March 24, 1994 sitting of the said committee and tabled in this House by its chair, the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands—the provincial commissions have every right to suspend the hearing process, as long as the September 16 deadline is met. So, the commissions have decided to start sitting.

I respect their decision, while I do not agree with it. Clear indication had been given by this House through a vote in second reading on the principle of Bill C-18 that a brake was being put on the process and that it should be brought to a stop.

Some people are scheduled to appear in a matter of days before provincial commissions, in Quebec in particular, to make representations. Unfortunately, that will all be in vain. I think that it might have been wise to suspend the process for a few days to see what Parliament's decision on Bill C-18 would be, especially in light of clear indications that we were going to stop the process.

That is all I had to say on Bill C-18 for the time being. As I said earlier, as a member of the Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, I have no intention of taking a firm stand on what I plan to defend in that venue. I have always maintained that I would listen to the testimony with a free hand and no blinkers on, and hear the representations all the interested parties may

want to make, by teleconference or in public hearings across the country, seeing that the Committee on Procedure and House Affairs is in control of its own proceedings and, based on the notice of motion put on the Notice Paper of this House, the committee will have plenty of leeway to carry out this review.

For all these reasons, I cannot support any of the motions put forward by my colleague from Kindersley—Lloydminster.

[English]

**Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have a chance to participate once again in this important debate. Unfortunately we are being asked to debate legislation in what I think is a highly inappropriate fashion. The government has used time allocation before and has suggested that we needed to rush this matter through Parliament.

I have just spent two weeks in my constituency and I must admit that while people are upset about the proposals in our particular part of British Columbia, they did not feel the matter ought to be a priority of the nation. There was certainly no obvious call to rush legislation that would in a sense sabotage the process.

I speak particularly as a member of Parliament from British Columbia. Once again the people of British Columbia will be shortchanged. Once again we will be skewered. Because Liberal members did not presumably like the boundaries in their areas, British Columbia will be underrepresented in Parliament next time. It is a dynamic part of Canada. Its population is expanding daily as people come from other provinces seeking job opportunities.

● (1045)

Basically the government has decided B.C. will be underrepresented in the next Parliament of Canada by deep sixing this updating of the boundaries based on the 1991 census. This is highly undemocratic.

To take up on a point my non-friend from the Bloc raised, these commissions are now going ahead. A number of people in Kamloops are asking whether they should make presentations to the commission. I respond by saying there is no point. The boundaries presumably will be changed again. The process has been set on the back burner for now. Who knows what the future will bring.

We have spent \$4 million or \$5 million so far on this process. Now we will be spending additional money holding hearings that are nonsensical, meaningless and illogical. There is no point. We are saying there is a public meeting being called on these boundaries where the public's input has no value.