

*Private Members' Business*

will be proposed that would harm the environment, sometimes in minor ways, sometimes significantly.

For example, the government's lemming-like drive to hurl itself off the cliff of international free trade agreements speaks to the need for federal policy itself to undergo environmental assessments. Free trade with Mexico is part and parcel of the industrial world's ongoing move to develop an international division of labour and production. This ongoing form of so-called development treats the Third World as not only a pool of cheap, easily exploited labour, but as a pollution haven encompassing most of the globe.

I see you signalling, Madam Speaker. I hope to continue when the bill is called again.

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** Of course the hon. member will be able to continue.

[*Translation*]

It being 5 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 30(6), the House will now proceed to consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

---

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

### PARLIAMENT OF CANADA ACT

#### MEASURE TO AMEND

**Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South)** moved that Bill C-322, an act to amend the Parliament of Canada Act and the Canada Elections Act (change of political affiliation) be read the second time and referred to Legislative Committee G.

He said: This private member's bill, Bill C-322, presents to the House a very simple proposition for consideration. That is that members of Parliament who choose to leave the party affiliation under which they were elected to this place or who choose after having been elected as independents to take on a party affiliation, should be required to put that important decision to what essentially is a ratification vote by their electors through contesting a by-election to be held within 90 days of the date on which they change party affiliation.

Now this is something that has arisen really in my case as a result of many interventions made to me on the part of constituents who expressed great concern of the fact that members of Parliament, once they arrive in this place, seem to feel that they are not accountable to their electors for their party affiliation and that they can, at will, choose to sit on either side of the House, either with other parties or as independents, without consulting their electors.

I have done a little bit of research on this. I have discovered that in recent years there have been not an insignificant number of occasions on which members of Parliament have changed party affiliation.

According to the research that has been compiled for me by the Library of Parliament since 1940 to date, we have had 56 members change party affiliation. Some of them have crossed the floor, some of them have sat as independents, some have indicated very privately what their intention is through telephone calls and so on.

Many of them have perhaps disappeared into history with no other footnote beside their names than the fact that they did change parties. Others are quite well known, I am sure, to most Canadians. Some have distinguished themselves in their new parties; others have not. I suppose of all of the British tradition of parliamentarians who have changed parties and have done so on a matter of conscience to great distinction, none is less notable than Sir Winston Churchill who, I understand, changed party affiliation on two occasions.

In raising this matter before the House, I am in no way suggesting that a change of party affiliation is a wrong thing to do or that it should never under any circumstances be countenanced or that members of Parliament should be obliged to ignore their conscience and the will of their electors and simply toe the line offered to them by party leadership.

On the contrary, I am recognizing by proposing this bill that indeed the conscience of a member of Parliament is a very important thing.

There are circumstances in which a change of party affiliation subjected to as I call it, a ratification vote by the electors of that member of Parliament, rather than playing as some have suggested into the hands of the party leadership by acting as a deterrent to changes of party affiliation, may in fact provide an independent-minded member of Parliament with a tool to encourage greater responsiveness on the part of party leadership by