

by the Department of Public Works and give us a global figure stating so many millions were spent to reimburse a certain number of companies. We are given a breakdown telling us which firms have carried out construction work, geophysical services, and so on: each firm is mentioned, together with the amount of money it was paid. I cannot believe that the figures showing what a company was paid in compensation for costs incurred, two or three months after the money has been paid, could possibly be of value to competing companies. I have listened for years to the oil companies using this mystique, inferring that if we get any information about what it costs to produce a barrel of oil the whole oil industry will be wrecked. That is sheer nonsense. They probably know more about each other's business than the government or the public knows about it.

We cannot make the minister change his mind, but I am not satisfied to accept the global figure as to the amount the government is taking in via the oil export charge and the amount paid out by way of compensation. The Auditor General cannot discharge my responsibilities as a member of parliament or the responsibilities of any other member of this committee. We have a responsibility to be satisfied that this money is not squandered or paid out in excessive amounts to companies which do not really deserve it under the program. I wish to register my protest and say that when Bill C-32 comes before us we shall continue this battle to get a more satisfactory reporting system.

Clause 2 agreed to.

Clauses 3 and 4 agreed to.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Schedule agreed to.

Preamble agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill reported.

**Mr. Chrétien** moved that the bill be read the third time and do pass.

Motion agreed to and bill read the third time and passed.

● (2050)

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### REPRESENTATION ACT, 1974

#### MEASURE TO PROVIDE FOR REPRESENTATION IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS AND ESTABLISH ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSIONS

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner):** Order. The President of the Privy Council (Mr. Sharp), seconded by the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. MacEachen), moves that Bill C-36, to provide for representation in the House of Commons, to establish electoral boundaries commissions and to remove the temporary suspension of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act, as reported (with amendments) from the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, be concurred in.

#### *Electoral Boundaries*

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, where is the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Sharp)?

**Mr. Lefebvre:** He is on his way.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Then how can he move a motion when he is not here?

**Mr. Chrétien:** I will move the motion on his behalf, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Chrétien (for Mr. Sharp)** moved that Bill C-36, to provide for representation in the House of Commons, to establish electoral boundaries commissions and to remove the temporary suspension of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act, as reported (with amendments) from the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner):** When shall the bill be read the third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

**Mr. Chrétien (for Mr. Sharp)** moved that the bill be read the third time and do pass.

**Mr. Gordon Ritchie (Dauphin):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to say a few words on this bill. It has been a most difficult process to arrive at the terms of the bill. Each province would like to keep what it has, and in addition there was the increase in the size of the House. Essentially, the difficulty lay with the slow-growth provinces which already had floors and with the application of floors to other provinces which did not have them: these are Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. Then, again, there was the question of how to fashion a method of redistribution that would be reasonably fair to the faster growing provinces such as Alberta, British Columbia and Ontario.

Having introduced the bill, the government put forward the amalgam theory which divided the provinces into three groups—small provinces, intermediate provinces and the large provinces of Ontario and Quebec. On the whole, the idea was a reasonable proposition which was generally accepted, at least for this redistribution, but it did leave the intermediate provinces somewhat short in their representation. The intermediate provinces, being neither large provinces nor small provinces but something in between, suffered a disadvantage which the government has attempted to rectify to a considerable extent, at least so far as Alberta and B.C. are concerned.

It is obvious from the 1971 census that the average constituency size in British Columbia is as great as or greater than the largest province, namely, Ontario. Although Ontario has been growing rapidly, because of its large number of seats the relative increase has not been as great. The amalgam theory at least has the advantage of being a basis to work from, though in many ways it resembles an ad hoc approach and leaves something to be desired so far as future redistribution is concerned. It is based on certain projections of population growth which may not materialize, particularly if our birth rate contin-