

*Private Members' Business*

In the early 1960s, these movements, which evolved into political parties, became important elements in Canadian party politics, hence the inconsistency and irrelevance of Bill C-229.

In the past, a number of political parties that sprang up on the Canadian scene were limited to a single province. Why then, today, is there a wish to take extreme action and amend the Canada Elections Act, except to stop the democratically elected Bloc Quebecois from demonstrating its repudiation of the old national parties and thus seeking to attain political autonomy. Nothing in the existing elections act mentions the need for a political party to nominate candidates in more than seven provinces to qualify for registration.

The act mentions only that in order to be registered and thus officially recognized nationally, a party must nominate more than 50 candidates, whether in one province or in the whole country, for the purposes of consistency, credibility and visibility.

This bill is a flagrant contradiction of the Parliament of Canada Act regarding the official status of political parties in the House. May I remind the member for Don Valley North that there is a rule whereby a political party must have at least 12 members elected to be recognized in this House.

Therefore, I ask the hon. member: How is it possible to recognize, in the House of Commons, a party which might not even be registered at the next general election? Even if the Elections Act requires that a given party nominate at least fifty candidates to be registered—which increases the probability of it being present in at least seven provinces—we consider that Bill C-229 is in net violation of the Parliament of Canada Act and the Canada Elections Act. In 1990, although the House had by then 295 seats, 12 members were still enough to be recognized as a party. The New Democratic Party's current status is a case in point: it wanted to be recognized, but it failed.

Let us be clear, the inclusion of such provisions in the Elections Act would mean the end of the multiparty system within the Canadian electoral system and the emergence of a "one-way" political system in which two parties, largely dominated by two parliamentary executives, would alternate serving the same interests and the same vision of a highly centralized Canada.

I should add that this bill lends credence to the argument that Canadian diversity is just a myth and that the distinctiveness of the Quebec society is gradually eroding. This is what we read recently in the *Globe and Mail*. That editorial said that Canadian society was one of the most homogeneous in the world. This is not what was reflected in the results of the last general election. In fact, the real myth is the notion of Canadian nationhood; to

believe that one day there will be only one culture from coast to coast is ludicrous.

• (1805)

We could say that somehow the Bloc Quebecois and the Parti Quebecois are the political arm of Quebec's culture, fighting to protect its originality and distinctiveness.

We believe that Bill C-229 introduced by the member for Don Valley North is a sham since it does not take into account cultural diversity or the legitimate position of the party forming the Official Opposition. I will remind you, Mr. Speaker, that as the opposition we have behaved in a responsible manner and according to parliamentary rules. We have dealt with issues of interest to Quebec and Canada and used question period with efficiency and respect, no matter the issue. We have proven to be efficient, transparent and respectful of fundamental democratic principles.

Therefore, we strongly denounce the bill introduced by the member for Don Valley North as being undemocratic in its very intent.

[English]

**Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North):** Mr. Speaker, for those who are watching the parliamentary channel instead of *Wheel of Fortune* or *Jeopardy*, the purpose of this private member's bill is to change the Canada Elections Act so that a party can only be a legitimate registered party here in Canada if it is running candidates in at least seven of the ten provinces, one of which has to be either Quebec or Ontario.

Of course, the purpose of this bill is very clear, and that is to knock the Bloc. I suppose there would be a lot of Canadians who would have a sneaking sympathy for the intent behind this bill. A lot of Canadians I have talked to, a lot of Canadians all of us have talked to are pretty ticked that we have in this House, making laws for our country, deciding or helping to decide how our money is spent, shaping the future of our country, a group of people essentially intent on the destruction of Canada as we know it.

A lot of people are asking is there not a way we can stop this. They are particularly exercised, particularly angry, when a group of people in this House who call themselves Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition have interests in mind, have an agenda in mind, which again is adverse to the interests of the national unity of our country.

A lot of Canadians would sympathize with the member for Don Valley West and the intent behind this bill to try to stop regional parties from forming and coming forward.

Sometimes the cure is a lot worse than the disease. Although the disease is bad, this cure is a whole lot worse. It is kind of like those ancient dragons. You cut off one head but two worse heads, more fierce with larger teeth, spring up in its place.