

provinces". This was also the view held by Mr. Arthur B. Keith, an authority on constitutional law, who wrote in his book entitled "Responsible Government and the Dominion", that it was expressly recognized in 1907 by the imperial government that confederation is a pact which cannot be amended, except with the consent of the provinces. Lord Carnarvon and Viscount Haldane, jurists of repute, have shared that view, as well as the fathers of confederation, Sir John Macdonald, George Brown and Mr. McGee who said: "What we have on the clerk's table is a contract."

And yet, in 1943, not only the advice of the provinces has not been sought, but those from Quebec who protested were told that the matter concerned the dominion authorities only and that the prime minister and the leader of the opposition of the Quebec legislature had nothing to do with this matter.

I trust therefore that if some day it is decided to amend further the pact of 1867 more concern will be given than in 1943 to the legal procedure to be followed.

In the meantime, however, political or sentimental considerations should not be allowed to delay further the adoption of this resolution, and I trust that this house will deem it its duty to support wholeheartedly this resolution based on justice and security.

Mr. LESAGE (Translation): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the hon. member for Chicoutimi (Mr. Gagnon). But, before I would say that I am not opposing the basic opinions he expressed in his speech, because I feel that the redistribution of electoral seats by provinces should be attended to as soon as possible. In the course of his statement, he spoke of the economic chaos attributable to the present government. I wish to know what exactly is this chaos; let him define it; by economic chaos does he mean the present condition when, in Canada, the purchasing power is higher and more fairly distributed than ever?

Mr. GAGNON (Translation): I do not intend to make another speech in answer to the question of the hon. member for Montmagny (Mr. Lesage) concerning the present economic condition of our country. We may have another opportunity of dealing with this matter in the budget debate.

Mr. RENE JUTRAS (Provencher) (Translation): Mr. Speaker, I wish first to congratulate the hon. member for Chicoutimi (Mr. Gagnon) who has just spoken.

I have been greatly pleased to hear his eloquent words, for they have been doubly gratifying to me, for having been uttered in

[Mr. Gagnon.]

French. I must admit that I concur, in a large measure, with the views expressed by himself and the hon. member for Charlevoix-Saguenay (Mr. Dorion); however, I must say that I do not agree with these hon. gentlemen as to the means to attain the results sought.

(Text) I wish to deal with this subject briefly, Mr. Speaker, and more or less from the western point of view. We have just heard the question discussed more or less from the point of view of the province of Quebec. We have a great deal in common—

Mr. LALONDE: The hon. member for Chicoutimi was speaking for himself, not for the province of Quebec.

Mr. JUTRAS: That general view is held in some quarters in eastern Canada. When this question came before the house, I believe in 1943, I was away and did not have an opportunity of discussing it, so that I should like to avail myself of this opportunity to place on record a few facts in connection with redistribution.

Personally I feel it is unfortunate that this resolution has been brought before the house at this time, because we are not in position to deal with it as it should be dealt with. There are many great problems that we have to face at the present time. The budget has not yet been discussed, and none of the main estimates have come before the house. There is a certain feeling of unrest throughout the country, and I think it would be best to leave this matter, which is bound to be contentious and will raise many sharp differences, until a later day. To my mind this presents a serious problem and it is something that should be discussed fully and not rushed through the house. It is not just a matter of arithmetic, dividing and subtracting—mostly subtracting, in the case of the west; it is a technical problem, a problem which almost assumes constitutional proportions.

I should like to deal briefly with the census of 1941, which would be the basis of redistribution. What value has that census? We must not forget that it was taken when the country had been at war for a little over two years. Many of our young men had enlisted in the armed forces, and while those who took the census tried to show the original domicile of those men, there is no doubt a large number of them were registered in provinces other than their own. There was also a considerable migration of population from one province to another, and I shall attempt to show that this migration was to the detriment of the western provinces.