

The proportionate representation therefore, between the eastern and the western Provinces has been as follows:

Date	East	West
1872	190	10
1882	200	11
1887	200	15
1892	196	17
1902	186	28
1906	186	35
1912	177	57

These figures show that we are in the presence of two phenomena; first, that while the representation to which the eastern Provinces is entitled is diminishing, the representation of the west is increasing, and; second, that the approach to equality has been very much more rapid in the last five years than at any previous period. Between 1902 and 1906, the west increased by seven members only, while between 1906 and 1912 the west increased by twenty-two, and the east declined by nine—a difference, as they say in parliament, of 31 on a division. In other words, while in 1906 the west had only 15.83 per cent. of the total representation, to-day it is entitled to 24.36, or almost one-fourth of the whole House.

As the life of the House is five years from the return of the writs at a general election, the question at once arises whether, consistency with the spirit of the constitution, the Commons as at present constituted ought to continue until the natural end of its term, or, in view of the very large change in the right of representation, it ought to give place to one in accordance with that right. No one can regard as quite satisfactory the continuation of a House of Commons which is out of harmony with the provisions of our constitution. One cannot say, of course, that such a House is unconstitutional, in the sense of being unlawful, but every one must agree with Mr. Anson's view:

"When any large change is made in electoral conditions, as in 1832, in 1867-8, and in 1885, it is proper that those new conditions should be put to the test, and the newly enfranchised enjoy their new rights at the earliest opportunity" (a).

The change effected by the increased population in the west while not comparable, in one respect, to the change worked by the

(a) *Laws and Customs of the constitution*, Vol. 1, p. 307.