

May I continue what I have to say in the order of the remarks of my hon. friend? At the outset I might observe that with most of the items in the speech from the throne he appears to be in hearty accord. At any rate, he made no comment on the greater part of the speech, and I gather from his silence in this particular that the speech on the whole commends itself favourably to him, as indeed I should expect that it would. However, he has in the course of his remarks been critical of one or two references in the programme as therein outlined.

One remark he made was not specifically in reference to any item in the speech from the throne, but was more, I imagine, in the way of a sort of solace to his soul, namely that the representation in this chamber at the present time was not as much in accord with the numerical complexion of the population of the country as he thought it ought to be. He indicated that the total number of votes cast for his party ought to have given it, on a numerical count, a larger representation in the House. May I remind him that the constituencies as they appear at the moment, and as they were in the recent campaign, were the result of the work of a joint committee, of which, if I am not mistaken, he himself was a member. My hon. friend shakes his head. In that I stand corrected. At any rate, two or three members of his party were members of that committee. The late member for South Oxford, Mr. Donald Sutherland, I am reminded by my hon. friend from Quebec East (Mr. Lapointe), was a member of that committee, and I think that any committee of which Mr. Sutherland was a member may have been expected to take pretty good care of the interests of the Conservative party. When that report was brought into the House, all members of this House, regardless of the party to which they belonged, concurred in it, and the report was passed unanimously. There was no exception taken to it. In other words, it was generally conceded that the government in the preparation of the electoral map had sought to do what was wholly fair and right with respect to the representation of all parts of this country.

May I just add this? My hon. friend drew attention to what he regarded as an evil, namely, that there was no representation in this House whatever of minorities in certain areas. He did not propose a remedy, he pointed out the evil and he immediately ran away from the one obvious remedy which suggests itself, namely, the application, to a limited extent, at least, of the principle of proportional representation or of the single

transferable vote. If my hon. friend will reflect for a moment upon where his members come from, he will agree that in considerable part they come from large cities, Toronto for example. I see seats over there representing something like eleven members who are returned in virtue of the votes that are cast in that one Tory hive. Toronto returns directly or indirectly eleven members altogether, they are all Tories; there is not a single Liberal among them. My hon. friend will surely not for one moment say that the number of Liberals there are in Toronto is not sufficient to entitle them to the representation of at least a single member in this House. If our electoral choices were made fairly and squarely on the basis of numbers, there would in fact be several Liberal members if the total Liberal vote counted. I simply point that out because I agree with him in part that the present system needs modification. But I do not agree with him when he is unable to give us any suggestion as to how that condition might be changed, especially when there is before him, as there has been before this country for a long time, a plan that has worked very well in other countries, and that ought to work equally well, applied within limits, within our own country.

My hon. friend was of the opinion that the time had come when the rural constituencies should be represented on exactly the same numerical basis as the urban, or vice versa. I cannot altogether agree with him as to that. He says that the rural constituencies have virtually the same opportunities to-day that the cities have, now that we have the automobile, the aeroplane and other devices. They have in some particulars, but they have not when it comes to the influence of opinion upon the affairs of government. I think my hon. friend will realize in a moment that in the cities there are the large journals, the daily press, which has a mighty influence on public opinion. My hon. friend will agree that the influence of the great dailies which issue from the cities is vastly greater than that of the rural press. Then in the cities there are such institutions as boards of trade, chambers of commerce, manufacturers' associations and the like, different organizations concerned with almost every interest, all of which bodies can quickly bring to bear through the influence they have on public opinion their views and ideas in a manner in which rural communities cannot begin to exercise any influence. For that reason, I am inclined to think that some special consideration may have still to be shown for some little time to come to the rural constituencies.