

*British North America Act*

At the present time the province of New Brunswick is guaranteed 10 members because that is equal to the number it has in the other place. The province of New Brunswick has not been one of our more rapidly growing provinces in terms of population. The province of Newfoundland, which has been one of our more rapidly growing provinces in terms of population, is guaranteed seven members. However, Mr. Speaker—and I have given this matter some study—it is probable that in the next census the growth rate of this province will be fourth in Canada, and consequently it will lose a seat in the House of Commons and will have only six members.

At the same time, in relation to the province of New Brunswick, its population will have increased to such a point that on the basis of the actual population in the province, applying the same divisor as to the province of Newfoundland, it will be entitled to eight members. I believe this is a terrible inequity and I am surprised that the learned member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) did not realize this when he introduced that clause in his bill. For this reason I cannot support the hon. member's bill and I suppose no Newfoundland or Manitoba member could support it, because the province of Manitoba would find itself in a very embarrassing position if this bill were passed.

I am glad the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre is here when I oppose his bill because I would not want any member of my party to be able to go into his province and say about this man who can do so much for parliamentary reform, "You have less members in the House of Commons today because of a bill introduced and passed in that house by your own esteemed member." I assure you, Mr. Speaker, this is my sincere motivation in opposing this bill.

The rate of growth of Manitoba's population is at the present time much the same as the province of Newfoundland. What will happen? Perhaps it will take two censuses to establish this pattern, but Manitoba will begin to lose members in this house at a time when they may have a population almost twice as great as that of New Brunswick. I think this would be a terrible situation.

I believe I have illustrated this great weakness in the bill introduced by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre and hope that at some future date when the bill is re-introduced he will have redrafted it. In doing so he would perhaps be performing a service if

[Mr. Cashin.]

he could find a formula to remove the inequity that I suggest would occur with regard to the growth patterns of this great country.

**Mr. Knowles:** Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member permit a question?

**Mr. Cashin:** Yes.

**Mr. Knowles:** Is the hon. member willing to enlist the services of his colleague the hon. member for Antigonish-Guysborough (Mr. Stewart) and others in drafting an appropriate amendment?

**Mr. Cashin:** With regard to anything that will be for the good of Newfoundland and Manitoba—because they are both notorious provinces in regard to their members—I would enlist the support of any member of this house to help the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre in drafting a bill. I was not aware that he needed such help because I believed that was an oversight on his part. However, Mr. Speaker, if there is one man who can give the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre sound advice, it is the very distinguished member for Antigonish-Guysborough.

• (5:40 p.m.)

As I have mentioned, this is a very serious weakness in the bill. We should consider the reasons for instituting the other place as they were enumerated in 1867. Perhaps one reason—it is not the most prominent one but I am sure it was in the minds of the legislators at that time—was the idea that we should have the same kind of system in Canada as they had in the United Kingdom. It is a pity that we, in Canada, have not been able to bring about the changes in our system that they have been able to bring about in the United Kingdom. One of the changes brought about in the House of Lords has been referred to, but they have also brought about some meaningful changes in the House of Commons, far beyond anything we have been able to accomplish here.

This is another reason for my opposition to this bill. I should like to see the energies of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) devoted to this more important problem. There is another reason to which reference has been made by the hon. member, and that is the protection of minorities, the sort of guarantee of territorial equality for the maritimes or Upper and Lower Canada. If these guarantees of territorial equality had not been given at the time of confederation, then it is quite probable the