

on one or two occasions, the province of Ontario suffered a loss in its representation from ninety-two to eighty-two, and may lose again not after the last census but after the one following that. That is a result of the fluctuation of the population. If our population does go down I hope it will come back again at some future time. I sincerely hope that the provinces of Saskatchewan and Manitoba, both of which apparently are due to lose some seats if redistribution is carried out on the basis of the recent census, will come back in their population and gain seats. I for one want to see the population of the western provinces greatly increased, thereby increasing their membership in this house.

Mr. L. A. MUTCH (Winnipeg South): Mr. Speaker, in rising at this late hour to say a few words on the motion now before the house I am perhaps motivated more by the spirit of being against something than is usually the case when I rise in this chamber. I hasten to say to you, sir, that in my opposition to this motion I am impelled more by the implication which it arouses indirectly than by the fact that I am a representative of one of the provinces whose representation will suffer if redistribution is carried out in accordance with the existing practice.

This question of redistribution brings very sharply into focus a problem which concerns all of us in this house and the whole of Canada; that is, the right of the Canadian people to amend their own constitution without reference to the parliament at Westminster. I am not a lawyer, and I am not prepared to discuss the legal aspects of that question. I believe, however, that I represent the feeling of a very large proportion of the people of my con-

stituency and, indeed, of the people of Canada when I say that important matters, such as the one confronting us in this motion, should be capable of settlement and solution without reference to any body outside our dominion. Therefore I am opposed to the motion, for the same reason that in 1943 I suggested that in the wording of the recommendation which then went to Westminster the house should defer all consideration of redistribution for two years following the conclusion of hostilities. I shall do what I can during this session or otherwise to bring about such deferment for at least this period of time, if that may be possible. I am opposed to consideration of redistribution at the present time, because I am opposed to any loss of representation from the prairie provinces on the basis of the 1941 census, for the reasons given by other speakers this afternoon and for the further reason that within the next year another census will be held which will give us a much more accurate picture of the population trend in those provinces. I shall oppose the reintroduction of this motion or any other motion with the same intent at this or any subsequent session of parliament, the result of which would be to reduce the representation of the prairie provinces at this time; and I shall be prepared to advocate and support, if the present system is to continue, such necessary amendment of the British North America Act as will secure to the people of western Canada at least the moderate representation they now have.

I move the adjournment of the debate.

Motion agreed to and debate adjourned.

At six o'clock the house adjourned, without question put, pursuant to standing order.