

Edward Island. In 1873 we entered into the agreement with the federal parliament, and we thought that it could not be changed at will by a vote of either or both houses at Ottawa. For instance, at the present time the feeling is that there should be reduced representation in certain of the provinces. On the other hand there is the feeling that there should be increased representation. A very good argument was brought forward to-day by the hon. member for Prince (Mr. MacNaught) with reference to our entering into confederation in 1873 with six members. We did not go into the agreement in 1867 because they would not grant us six members; we came in under a separate agreement in 1873 granting Prince Edward Island six representatives in the House of Commons and four in the Senate, and three supreme court judges. None of these things, according to our agreement, can be taken away from us. They can be added to, but they cannot be taken away from. Let any attempt be made to change that provision for three supreme court judges or to reduce our representation in the senate. The same kind of agreement was made with regard to our representation in this house. But we lost out. Whether it was our own fault or not I do not know. Around the corridors Dame Rumour might turn the argument of the Minister of Justice to read: No province shall have a smaller number of members of the House of Commons than it has senators, and the western members then might make a drive to increase their numbers of senators in the west. That may or may not come.

The ground we take in objecting to this resolution is simply that the provinces are being ignored in not being given the right of consultation with the federal government. If a move of this kind is made easy by adopting this resolution, it might be followed by a move to upset the balance in the senate, which would be a very dangerous thing. It would really be a deliberate assault on the very ramparts of confederation. We remember well that while Prince Edward Island entered confederation with six members, that number was whittled down to five in 1891, cut to four in 1901, and was about to be reduced to three after the redistribution bill which followed the 1911 census. But in 1915 our province was consulted with regard to this, and we had our representation restored in that year from three to four members. But we should not have had it cut down from six. However, there will be an opportunity later on for us to urge that matter in this parliament, to bring in a new amendment to go back to the terms of the agreement of 1873 and give us

[Mr. McLure.]

the fulfilment of the agreement in every respect and the representation of six under which we entered confederation.

I cannot see that this measure gives us any sense of security. We of the island have too often witnessed our arguments rejected, our claims dismissed, and our views snowed under by the sheer weight of overwhelming majorities.

It is my feeling that this resolution offers little protection to us. I am apprehensive of a move which might reduce Prince Edward Island's representation in the other place; this would be followed by a reduction of membership in this chamber.

The amendment seems to me to offer a substantial measure of protection to minorities. Consultation with the provinces in an established practice in our Canadian democracy. I feel that by consultation with the provinces protection can be given against the power of numbers. In measures of this kind that is the course which the government should take, and not assume to itself arbitrarily the right to dictate to the provinces.

In closing, let me say that it is not solely the matter of representation which concerns Prince Edward Island. If the claim made by the Minister of Justice and embodied in this resolution is established by the defeating of the amendment and the passage of the resolution, Prince Edward Island's agreement of 1873, by which she entered the dominion, is not worth the paper it is written on.

Mr. W. A. TUCKER (Rosthern): I wish to deal briefly with four or five points in regard to this proposal and the amendment thereto.

The first point, which I should like to see cleared up definitely, is the effect of the passing of this resolution as regards the future. We are asking the British parliament to enact, as section 51, subsection 1, "The number of members of the House of Commons shall be two hundred and fifty-five," and so on. I take it that, since we are not proposing to repeal section 52, we are not binding ourselves for all time to a membership in this house of 255, and that section 52 will still be in force, that—

The number of members of the House of Commons may be from time to time increased by the parliament of Canada, provided the proportionate representation of the provinces prescribed by this act is not thereby disturbed.

The only difficulty about it is, as I see it, that this is a subsequent enactment and it is in such precise and definite terms that it may be that we are binding ourselves never to increase the representation in the future. That is an important matter. It may well be that if the industrial part of Canada grows rapidly the maritimes will very shortly reach the