

of his own province is somewhat derelict in his duty. He is no less a Canadian if he thinks of it in terms of his own province.

I listened with a great deal of attention to the remarks of the hon. member for Lake Centre (Mr. Diefenbaker), and the hon. member for Stanstead (Mr. Hackett). Although I am not a lawyer, I think they entirely missed the point of the resolution, and I shall tell the house why. If one looks over the British North America Act he will see that there are certain sections dealing with general clauses and powers given to the dominion. Then there are certain powers specifically defined as powers of the dominion and of the provincial governments. It is my opinion as a layman that if the dominion government were interfering or asking the British parliament to amend any of the sections under which the provincial governments have power they would then have, first of all, to go to the provinces and ask for the right to do so. But under the general clauses dealing with redistribution it is my opinion that the dominion government has the power to bring in this resolution without consulting the provinces. However, I shall say that when the British government read the resolution in its present form they will be in just as much doubt as the members of the house were when it was first introduced, because I doubt whether many hon. members would have understood the resolution had it not been for the explanation given by the Minister of Justice. In my opinion it is extremely clumsily worded and in fact somewhat misleading because it says:

And whereas it is considered that a more equitable apportionment of members to the various provinces could be effected if readjustment were made on the basis of the population of all the provinces taken as a whole.

We are not doing that. I think it is explained in the last two clauses that we are not taking the population of the provinces as a whole, because when we come to divide by 250 we leave out Prince Edward Island, the northwest territories and the Yukon. Therefore the wording of the resolution is certainly misleading in the beginning, and it is not until you get to the end of the resolution that you find the meat of it. I was not at all surprised that the Minister of Justice, when asked by an hon. member how he arrived at the figure 250, should reply, "Well, I don't know." I doubt if many hon. members could say how that figure was arrived at as a quotient; but I say it was a clever piece of mathematics, whoever was responsible for it.

Before I pass on to some figures and further statements, may I say that in the amendment I believe the hon. member for Lake Centre, if

[Mr. Reid.]

he spoke for his party, inadvertently or otherwise has tied up his party with the principle of the Canadian government going to the British parliament for amendments to the British North America Act. Probably he did not intend to do that, but that is the actual effect of the amendment. Of course I for one believe that this Canada should have the right to amend its own constitution without going to the British parliament.

The hon. member for Rosetown-Biggar (Mr. Coldwell), the leader of the C.C.F. party, spoke in favour of the resolution, and I am not altogether surprised at that, since Saskatchewan stands to gain under it. He and every other leader know the troubles that arise when you have to reduce the representation of a province. The hon. gentleman comes to this house with a large number of members from Saskatchewan, and I can visualize his difficulties if he should be told that there would be four less constituencies, for he then would have to say to the members of his party, "Well, which of you boys are going to stay home?"

An hon. MEMBER: All of them, I hope.

Mr. REID: Then last evening the hon. member for Moose Jaw (Mr. Thatcher) gave his views as to what that party would do in regard to the senate, should they come to power. May I say to him and to the leader of the C.C.F., after having looked into the number of members, that if this resolution passes the house and the increased numbers are given the provinces of Quebec and Ontario, the C.C.F. will wait an additional twenty-five years before they take over the reins of government; and I say that in all sincerity.

In regard to the increased representation for the province of Quebec, I think under the present set-up that province has a real grievance. It has been known for years that Ontario has had seven or eight members too many, according to population. Rather than reduce the number of members from Ontario, however, after someone found out how this new proposal would work, they come along and add one member to Ontario and eight to Quebec. In all kindness, I want to tell hon. members from Quebec that if they look over the figures they will see that most of the eight members to be added to the representation of that province are likely to go to the city of Montreal and not to the great hinterland outside. Coming back to what I said a moment ago, however, to my way of thinking this resolution has been introduced at this time to, shall I say, placate Quebec because Ontario has had seven members more than it