

—and at its first session the federal parliament passed the Parliament of Canada Act and the Intercolonial Railway Act, and by so doing undertook its obligations to carry out the interprovincial agreement of 1866, also not to legislate in any manner that is inconsistent with or repugnant to what is written in the 1866 agreement and the imperial legislation that gives effect to it.

I would point out that the proposed amendment of the British North America Act is not in the interests of the maritime provinces. We have twenty-six members from the maritime provinces in this house out of a total of 245. If this resolution carries we shall have in the next house twenty-seven members out of a total membership of 255. I should like to draw the attention of the Minister of Justice to section 52 of the British North America Act, which reads:

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.

I contend that if this resolution goes into effect it will disturb the present proportionate representation of the maritime provinces in this house. At the present time the maritime provinces have twenty-six members out of 245, and if we are to have only twenty-seven out of 255 when this resolution becomes law then the proportionate representation is being changed and section 52 is violated. Not only that, as time goes on our representation will change even more. It will be only a matter of time, I believe, before the province of Nova Scotia will have as its representation in this house only the number of representatives it has in the senate. That will probably be the result should this resolution carry because of the increase in population that will take place in other parts of Canada. Nova Scotia would then find itself in the same position as Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick. I think we are going beyond the provisions of section 52 of the British North America Act in proposing the amendment contained in this resolution.

I want to see Quebec have the representation it is entitled to, and I want to see the other provinces fairly represented. Under the present set-up and with the conditions that prevail at the present time, the representation appears to be unfair. When the minister introduced the resolution he said that up until the turn of the century everything went all right, that it was only since the turn of the century that any discrepancy or unfairness had crept in. This thought has occurred to me. Were not the fathers of confederation right? If we take a long-range view of it, may not the

[Mr. Hazen.]

present arrangement work out all right in the end? The London resolution and the B.N.A. Act were intended to last more than a generation. The act worked all right prior to 1900; may it not work all right again?

In any event, I want to see Quebec fairly represented in this house; I do not want to see any province unfairly represented, or have more members than it is entitled to. I submit, as I have already submitted, that this proposed amendment is violating section 52 of the British North America Act.

Mr. G. R. PEARKES (Nanaimo): Mr. Speaker, in order that all sides of an argument may be fairly presented it is necessary to deal with many different points of view. Earlier in the day we heard the excellent speech made by the hon. member for Lake Centre (Mr. Diefenbaker), in which he developed the historical side of this argument. Later, we had what was referred to by the hon. member for North Battleford (Mr. Townley-Smith) as the philosophical side of the argument developed by the hon. member for Davenport (Mr. MacNicol). Then, later, we had the legal side of the argument developed and elaborated by the hon. member for St. John-Albert (Mr. Hazen) who has just spoken. Then we have had the administrative side developed, and reference was made to the difficulties of those who live in the great undeveloped areas of the north, the large number of men who went to work in the great mining areas in the Mackenzie basin just before the last election and were deprived of their franchise.

So far the practical side has not been touched upon, a study of the point of view of the man in the street. At the risk of falling a victim to the verbal claymore of the Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. Mackenzie), I should like to refer for a few minutes to what I would call the practical side or the point of view of the man in the street. It is the man in the street who has to pay out money for such legislation or government as he receives, and for many years past he has thought that this country is overgoverned. He stops to think of the federal government, the provincial governments and all the municipal governments, and he keeps on saying that this country is overgoverned.

If he were to look at this little book called the Parliamentary Guide he would find, if his figures agreed with the rapid calculation I have made in the last few minutes, that in the senate there are some ninety-six seats, with one or more vacancies.

Mr. HACKETT: There are plenty of candidates to fill that.