

to give to the new provinces an increase of representation in the Senate. The difficulty, however, is rather in what follows in the resolution of my hon. friend:

—and for such further readjustment of the representation of the western provinces in the Senate as may from time to time be called for by reason of development in population and importance of interests.

My hon. friend, I think, will agree with me that, when we deal with this question, we should deal with it in the spirit of the Confederation Act and at once make a new unit in the west and determine what the representation of that unit should be. It would not, in my judgment, be in accordance with the spirit of the Confederation Act to leave it to parliament to increase from time to time the representation in the Senate. If there is one thing upon which all agree as to the controlling spirit of the constitution, it is that, in the popular Chamber, representation should be based on population, but in the second Chamber the principle of representation by population should not be followed, but that each sectional unit should be represented by a fixed number. Ontario was made a unit with 24 members in the Senate, Quebec another with 24 and the maritime provinces another with 24. My hon. friend suggests, in effect, a unit of 24 members. But the part of his motion to which I would invite his further attention and ask for his consideration is this: In giving 24 members to the western provinces, six for each of the four, leaving the matter to be changed from time to time, should we be acting according to the spirit of the constitution? If it were declared that the unit should remain at 24, or that, on these provinces reaching a certain population, it should be made a certain additional number, I for my part, would be prepared to consider that view. But I think that the one thing we ought to insist upon is that nothing should be left indefinite, but that we ought to determine at once what is the maximum of representation to be given to the western provinces to make them a unit. The question is not free from difficulty. It is one upon which I should be glad to have the views of my hon. friend. It is a question the consideration of which I should approach sympathetically. If the hon. member (Mr. J. D. Taylor) will allow me, I would suggest that he do not press his motion to a vote, but withdraw it and leave it to the consideration of the hon. members. I assure him, on behalf of the government, that we will give it the best consideration possible.

Mr. T. S. SPROULE (East Grey). It seems to me that the position taken by the Prime Minister (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) is a very proper one under the circumstances. I

Sir WILFRID LAURIER.

think it is generally understood that the representation of the country both in the Commons and in the Senate was settled on a basis that was intended to be permanent at that time—though changed conditions may necessitate changes in the future—and that in the House of Commons the basis of representation was population, Quebec being the pivot. I think it was equally intended that there should be no change in the number assigned to the representation in the Senate. With equal propriety, I believe, Quebec might have been made the pivot of representation in the Senate as well as in the Commons, with the provision that when the western country was brought in it should be considered one portion to which similar representation should be given to that given to Quebec. It is a very good plan it seems to me, for us to provide for the present. Let us deal with the conditions of the future as those conditions make change necessary. I do not think that our experience of the past in laying down cast iron rules intended to apply for all time justifies us in believing that we can with safety and propriety repeat that course. So many changes take place that we are obliged to make changes to adapt ourselves to the new conditions. It seems to me wise to deal with the present and practically let the future take care of itself in this regard.

Mr. J. D. TAYLOR. I am sure I could not reasonably find fault with the reception which the right hon. the first minister (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) has given to this resolution. And I may say at once that I am very glad to accept the suggestion which he has made to withdraw the resolution, leaving the matter to his—as I am sure it will be—favourable consideration. Let me say that my reason for suggesting provision for future readjustment was this: We have at present 35 members from the west in the House of Commons. In the next parliament, if the election takes place after the census of 1911, we shall have 65 members at least. Then in the parliament first succeeding the census of 1921, unless all signs fail, we shall have at least 125 members from these western provinces in this House. Therefore I did not suggest as a finality that the west should be content with one unit of 24 senators. I might also point out that western, like eastern Canada, is varied in its interests, and the time may come when we shall have on the Pacific coast sufficient population to justify a unit for purposes of representation equal in importance to the unit of the Atlantic maritime provinces. It may very well be that it will be thought proper to give us a separate unit for the Pacific coast, because our interests differ entirely from those of the