

cause a measure to be laid before the parliament of the United Kingdom to be expressed as follows:

An act to provide for the readjustment of the representation of the provinces in the House of Commons of Canada consequent on the decennial census taken in the year one thousand nine hundred and forty-one.

Whereas the Senate and the House of Commons of Canada in parliament assembled have submitted an address to His Majesty praying that His Majesty may graciously be pleased to cause a bill to be laid before the parliament of the United Kingdom for the enactment of the provisions hereinafter set forth,

Be it therefore enacted by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the lords spiritual and temporal and commons, in this present parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same as follows:

1. Notwithstanding anything in the British North America Acts, 1867 to 1940, it shall not be necessary that the representation of the provinces in the House of Commons be readjusted, in consequence of the completion of the decennial census taken in the year one thousand nine hundred and forty-one, until the first session of the parliament of Canada commencing after the cessation of hostilities between Canada and the German reich, the kingdom of Italy and the empire of Japan.

I think it timely to set aside right now an argument that could come to some hon. members' minds to the effect that, as the government has not yet decided to declare officially the end of the war, this should be a reason why the redistribution could not be submitted to the house during the present session. On this point let me remind you that this is not a measure that was passed under the War Measures Act. It is altogether different and apart from all the decisions taken by the government under the War Measures Act. The decision referred to was taken by parliament itself. It is not a matter of considering what the government has in mind, or deciding about the official end of the war; rather it is a matter for parliament to state if the conditions mentioned in the amendment of 1943 are fulfilled. Thus, the only question is: is the present session the first one after the cessation of hostilities? The reply cannot be other than affirmative. On this point I do not wish to refer to any other authority than that of the Minister of Justice (Mr. St. Laurent) who, speaking on October 2, said, as reported at page 680 of *Hansard*:

Actual hostilities have ceased, but the state of war still exists at the present time.

And a little further down, referring to the powers delegated to the governor in council, he said:

They will be diminished; they have been diminishing by the cessation of hostilities.

Also in a speech delivered in this house by the Minister of National Defence for Air (Mr. Gibson), on October 4, as reported at page 763 of *Hansard*, he said:

[Mr. Dorion.]

Following the cessation of hostilities in Europe. . . ."

And on Friday last, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Ilesley) said as reported at page 997 of *Hansard*:

A budget which is the first to follow the cessation of hostilities, both in Europe and in the Pacific.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I contend that it is the duty of this parliament, particularly the duty of the government, to proceed, during the present session, to the redistribution of the representation in this House of Commons. If we want the people to believe in parliament, we must adhere to the decisions of parliament.

Mr. PAUL EDMOND GAGNON (Chicoutimi) (Translation): I am pleased to support the resolution moved by the hon. member for Charlevoix-Saguenay (Mr. Dorion) and I am glad to have an opportunity to champion the rights which the British North America Act confers on the provinces, in connection with their representation in the House of Commons.

May I first tender my hearty congratulations to the hon. members who, in 1943, protested so energetically and eloquently against the spoliatory measure then introduced by the government, and to express the wish that the seeds they have sown may produce an abundant harvest at the end of this debate.

Reading again the motion moved by the hon. the Minister of Justice (Mr. St. Laurent) on July 5, 1943, I find that one of the main reasons put forward by the authorities for postponing the proper readjustment and delimitation of electoral divisions was the fear that the differences of opinion to which that measure might give rise would harm our war effort. So, Mr. Speaker, under the pretext of national unity and good understanding, a serious injustice was done to the province of Quebec, and parliament—as was then said by the hon. member for Terrebonne (Mr. Bertrand)—“took the means at its disposal with a view to checking the influence which Quebec was entitled to have on the political destinies of this country”. In order to avoid stirring up the resentment of orangemen and imperialists ever ready to cry shame and to assume a “holier than thou” attitude when it comes to granting to the French Canadians that to which they are entitled in the legislative, economic and cultural spheres, the government sacrificed on the altar of race and creed prejudice the sacred principles of the Canadian constitution.

The time has now come to rectify the mistakes made in 1943 and I hope that other fallacies will not be put forward for delaying