

Mr. PUGSLEY. In the last census it prevented New Brunswick and Nova Scotia from preserving their previous representation.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I put this to my hon. friends from North Toronto and from Kings and Albert: If, at the last census, we had eliminated the whole of the population of Manitoba and the Northwest Territories, would not the diminution of the representation of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia have been less than it is to-day? I have not the figures under my hand, but I remember that the subject was closely considered by the Hon. Mr. Blair at that time, and he came to the conclusion that if the population of the Northwest had been eliminated altogether the representation of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick would have been larger than it is to-day. But I have simply to say this, as one of the representatives from Quebec: At the time of confederation Quebec was made the pivotal province, around which the representation of the whole Dominion revolved. But that gives no advantage to the province of Quebec, it is a matter of entire indifference to the province of Quebec. But, if it is to us a matter of total indifference and it is a matter not of indifference but of great interest to the maritime provinces, for my part, I would not be averse to selecting another mode of representation. On this matter I feel very strongly that we should not have any province harbouring the feeling that there had been an injustice done to it. The basis of representation adopted at the time of confederation was believed to be just and equitable and nothing could be more detrimental to confederation itself than the existence of such a belief, and if we are in a position to remedy that belief there is no reason why the question should not be tackled at the proper time. But, I would observe to the hon. member for Kings and Albert (Mr. Fowler) that he has attached undue importance to the addition which is said to have been made in 1896 to the area of the province of Quebec and that he has attached undue importance to the extension which it is proposed to make to the province of Quebec to-day. My hon. friend knows that at the present time, in the added territory, there is not one voter. It may be that there will be some voters at the time of the next census. If it be true that the boundary of Quebec was the height of land, which is the opinion of the Minister of Justice, then probably it is quite certain that the construction of the Grand Trunk Pacific will bring a population into that part of Quebec which will, to some extent, although not materially, affect the unit of representation. I do not think it will affect the next census. I do not think it is possible that it will do so, but in the future

it may have some effect. But, in so far as Ungava is concerned, it will be many generations, I am afraid, before the population of Ungava will have to be taken into consideration when we have to determine what shall be the unit of representation in this House. I wish it were otherwise. I wish I could say to the House that I believe that there would be a large population in Ungava, and if there were to be a large population in Ungava I would have no hesitation in saying to my compatriots in Quebec: Do not hesitate to disarrange the basis of representation so as to give satisfaction to the other provinces. I do not think the amendment which has been moved is at all justified by the circumstances of the case. The contingency is too remote. I would say more; it is not advisable at this moment to burden this resolution with conditions. The conditions should be left altogether open. I call the attention of hon. gentlemen to these pregnant words in the resolution:

That, upon the legislature of the province of Quebec consenting thereto, it is expedient to extend the boundaries of the said province upon such terms and conditions as may be agreed to by the said legislature and by parliament.

These words cover everything. They cover the very subject in hand. At the next session of parliament, if the government see fit to present a concrete resolution from the legislature of Quebec offering to take advantage of this resolution, and hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House say it is not sufficient, that they have the right to insist that some provision should be made for another basis of representation, then we can refuse our assent to the resolution of the Quebec legislature. As far as I can see it there is no necessity for inserting such an amendment as has been moved by the hon. member for Colchester.

Mr. J. J. HUGHES (Kings, P.E.I.). Mr. Speaker, this is an important question, no doubt, and one to which the government has given some attention. Parliament has not had the opportunity of giving it the same amount of consideration and for my part, as a member of parliament from the maritime provinces, I would feel reluctant to vote for the resolution as it stands were it not for the fact that my right hon. friend the Prime Minister (Sir Wilfrid Laurier), my hon. friend the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding), and other members of the government have declared that when this matter comes again before parliament at a subsequent session we will be just as free to consider all the details as we are to-day, that we will be free to amend, accept or reject the whole of it, and details will be the question of the representation of the smaller provinces. The