

Laurier) this afternoon that he is entirely in accord with the sentiment that the Senate should protect the smaller provinces, that the Senate should be so adjusted as to insure to the western provinces that they shall be represented in all important matters quite as fully as the larger provinces. I gathered from his remarks that he is in favour of the spirit of the resolution now before the House. I gathered also from the records of a few years ago when the question of Senate representation was before the House, that the right hon. leader of the House then realized that something should be done for British Columbia. Therefore, as I do not wish to make this in any sense a political address, but simply wish to bring the question in a formal way to the attention of the House and of the government, I shall not say anything more upon this resolution at present, but leave it with the hope that we may receive some sympathetic assurance from the government that a measure of justice will be done to the provinces of the west.

Mr. A. L. FRASER (Kings, P.E.I.). Mr. Speaker, I am glad of this opportunity to give some explanation of the vote I gave this afternoon in favour of the resolution for the abolition of the Senate. In the province from which I come, we are entitled to four senators, and it has so come about during the last few years that we are now entitled to only four representatives in this House. There has been a vacancy in our representation in the Senate for some time, and if the government really believes that representation in the Senate is of any value to a province, I think it behooves this government to fill that vacancy without delay. The vacancy occurred during last summer, this House has been in session for some time and the vacancies in the Senate representation from other provinces have been filled. The government, however, has not seen fit to fill this vacancy in the smallest province in Canada, and I repeat that the government should at once give us proper representation in that body.

Mr. A. S. GOODEVE (Kootenay). Mr. Speaker, I would like to add a word or two in support of this resolution. We in our province have felt for many years that we have not been quite fairly treated in regard to representation in the Senate. In the last general election, for the first time, the western provinces stood equal in representation to the maritime provinces. Under the British North America Act three units of representation in the Senate were established, each of 24 seats. We feel now that we have reached a time in the west when we should have one unit of representation, namely 24 senators, as we have west

of Lake Superior equal representation, namely 35 members, with the maritime provinces. That, I understand, is what this resolution asks for, that the Act shall be so framed that when our population shall warrant it, automatically we shall have the same representation as the other provinces. The new provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan have four senators each and automatically they will be increased to six each, but there is no provision of that kind in relation to British Columbia, we having only three senators. I shall not advance any argument after the able argument advanced by the Prime Minister himself this afternoon in regard to the resolution upon the abolition of the Senate. He very eloquently stated that the justification for the Senate would be that it afforded protection to minorities. I think that is a very strong argument in support of the resolution we have here. We want protection to minorities, and in this second Chamber which is supposed to safeguard the interests of the people, being an independent chamber, we seek to be duly and justly represented. You will readily see that, under present conditions, instead of being a source of strength, instead of being an assurance of fairness, the Senate might be a source of great danger to the western provinces. If, at any time, a question should arise in which there was a difference of opinion between the western provinces and the other three units that compose this Senate, advantage might be taken of the western provinces. I think that for this, if for no other reason, we might reasonably look not only to the first minister, but to the government also for support of this resolution.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER (Prime Minister). I have no complaint at all to make that this motion has been brought, still less of the manner in which it has been introduced by my hon. friend from New Westminster (Mr. J. D. Taylor). I rather welcome this motion and the expression of opinion which, up to this time, it has elicited in the House. I may say without hesitation that, so far as concerns my own individual opinion, I am altogether in sympathy with the object of the motion. The enacting part of the resolution begins as follows:

This House is of the opinion that provision should be made for immediate augmentation of the representation of the western provinces in the Senate, by increasing said representation to six members each for British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, respectively—

In introducing, some five years ago, the Bill for the creation of the two new provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan, I suggested, if I remember aright, this very idea that it would be advisable, before long,