

have added something to them which it is worth while to conserve. They should not lightly be the subject of decennial changes for any passing advantage of any party or any partisan. They should be established in such manner that they can remain the territorial setting of groups of Canadian citizens towards whom the men sitting in this house have, and feel that they have, specific responsibilities; citizens whom they can get to know not only as individuals but as members of a group capable of common ideals and aspirations and local traditions and even a local pride in the kind of contribution they have made in the past and are making and hope to make in the future, to the welfare of the nation, by and with their chosen representative.

At this time the unit of representation derived from the population of the province of Quebec is 51,213. In that province there are no less than seventeen constituencies with a population of less than 40,000; in Ontario, there are thirty-seven; in Nova Scotia, four; five in New Brunswick; one in Alberta; five in British Columbia. These are practically all rural constituencies, and it may with plausibility be asserted that their population at the taking of the census was affected by the movement of some of their people to urban centres to engage in war industries. Many of them are also actually represented by members of this house now engaged in the glorious task of securing its safety against the onslaughts of foreign enemies. Some of those constituencies might have to disappear, and that would be a matter of serious concern and one which should have serious consideration. Should these men now serving with our armed forces and those who have moved from rural to urban centres to engage in war activities be disturbed in their present duties by any anxieties as to what might be done to their home constituencies during their absence?

It is for these reasons that I recommend this resolution to the sympathetic consideration of the house, trusting that in other not too distant days a redistribution may be arrived at that will be fair to the respective provinces, fair to the men who are carrying on our fight, fair to those who feel that the historical significance attached to stable constituencies is something which has more than merely sentimental value.

Mr. GORDON GRAYDON (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I should like to say a word or two with respect to the remarks of the Minister of Justice (Mr. St. Laurent), who has sponsored this resolution.

May I say first of all to my hon. friend that it was with the greatest hesitation that

I undertook to inject into the debate any suggestion that he might perhaps better confine his remarks to the subject under discussion. I did so not simply because it was a matter of interest to myself or to the party which I have the honour to lead in this house, but because I felt it was essential that the resolution be adhered to in its present form, so far as the argument of the minister was concerned, from the point of view of the national interest in the larger sense.

I have no idea yet what the real motive was behind the lengthy argument which the minister made. A large part of his remarks seemed to be far afield from the problem to be discussed on this resolution. With every courtesy to the minister may I say in all fairness that I felt that he had presupposed some divisions in the house and in the country with respect to this measure which I believe do not exist. I have felt that it is improper at this time of war, as it is improper even in time of peace, to be even hesitantly provocative, shall I say, with respect to many matters which are dangerous so far as our national life is concerned, and I was sorry to see the minister this afternoon introduce into his argument some questions which I think could more properly have been left out. I do not believe in time of war or in time of peace in presupposing differences between our population or in creating unnecessary difficulties between the ministry and parliament or between different sections of our people. The minister's mention of the national anthem and the national flag I think might properly have been left to another time. The Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) took a stand on that this afternoon, as he did on a previous occasion in this house; he said this was not the time to indulge in discussions with respect to matters which might easily become inflammatory in a nation at war. With those sentiments I think most hon. members on this side are in agreement, because there are more urgent problems facing this country in time of war than questions respecting the union jack or the national anthem. I can only assume that the minister in his remarks—I am not saying this offensively, because it is a term generally accepted—was bringing in through the back door some propaganda which in his opinion was essential to his argument. But as I listened to it I was unable to agree that it was of very much help to him in support of his resolution.

I have always felt, Mr. Speaker, that in the final analysis we can rely on the people of this country, regardless of their racial origins, to be Canadians, and having regard to that fact it seems to me that all of us should at all