

down a measure of such importance six hours or more after we have been told by the Speaker that the Governor General will prorogue Parliament to-morrow. It is unfortunate that a matter of such importance should be left to the dying hours of the session, when we have not time to give it proper consideration. The address raises the whole question of the right of Parliament to amend the constitution in this way, especially with regard to the question of the representation of Prince Edward Island. I have a grave doubt whether we have a right to ask the British Parliament to make such a change in the agreement which brought about Confederation. The terms of that pact were definitely set forth in the British North America Act, and now it is proposed to alter the terms of union without reference to the people. I understand that this question was discussed at a meeting of the provincial Premiers some time ago and that no decision was arrived at by those gentlemen as to any action that might be taken. Nevertheless the Government consider that they are justified in asking the British Parliament to deal with this important question in the manner proposed. I doubt very much whether the Imperial Parliament will consider themselves justified in breaking the compact which forms the basis of Confederation, on a mere address from the members of the two Houses of the Canadian Parliament. It is also open to a great deal of discussion whether it is advisable to increase the number of senators, whether a smaller number would not produce better results than the increases as proposed under this address. The smaller body of men would be more representative, and would be probably selected with more care and judgment, and would in that way bring about better results in legislation, than the larger body can probably do. We have, at various times, since I have had the honour of having a seat in this Chamber, discussed this question of Senate representation and various ideas and proposals have been made by hon. gentlemen who have had time to give more study to this question than I have been able to do myself. In considering this address we should have had an opportunity of discussing the whole situation, the whole condition of this Senate and the organization of the Senate and possibly we might have arrived at a solution in dealing with this whole question,

Hon. Mr. BOSTOCK.

and perhaps have found some means of suggesting an improvement in the appointment of members to the Senate. I say again that I think this too big a question to be brought down for our consideration at so late an hour of the session, and when a large number of members of this Chamber have thought that the legislation that was going to be brought down was practically finished, and have gone away thinking there was practically very little more work to do. For these reasons I think we could hardly be expected to proceed with this address at the present time, and I do not know that any harm would be done by suggesting that this matter be held over and brought up at the beginning of next session of Parliament.

Hon. Mr. MURPHY—I listened with some attention to the remarks of the hon. leader of the Opposition and I may say I am in harmony with those remarks, in so far as not agreeing with the resolution in toto. But my reasons for disagreeing with it are somewhat different from those of the hon. gentleman who has just addressed the House. In my remarks on the address at the beginning of the session, I thought I made plain the position as I saw it then, and as I see it now, and as every man who comes from my province sees it. The position in Prince Edward Island, which was the first clause to be attacked, and which is the last clause in the resolution, is designed to do at least a measure of justice to that province. When I saw in the Morning Citizen the result of the work in the Commons last evening, I may frankly tell you that I was disappointed, but I knew the legislation in its final form was the result of the committee on both sides of the House, which had been endeavouring to make the best of a bad case, ever since the beginning of the matter. The representation of the provinces had to be readjusted, the matter was consequently referred to a committee comprising the ablest men on both sides of the House. We in Prince Edward Island feel that by an error in the writing of the Confederation contract, justice has been withheld from us ever since the readjustment clause came into effect in 1891, and our representation, which we then regarded as an irreducible minimum, was taken down from the six members that we had for over eight or nine years after the first confer-