

*Redistribution*

within a nation. It is true that in the province of Quebec the racial group to which I refer is in a majority, but I am speaking of that racial group as a minority in the rest of Canada. Even under the best conditions, there is always some fear, although for my part I do not allow myself to cultivate those fears, because I do not believe in them. I believe implicitly in the fair-mindedness of the Canadian people as a whole, and that applies particularly to my own province. I was glad therefore that my hon. friend the member for Charlevoix-Saguenay made no criticism with regard to the representation of Prince Edward Island, which has four members in the House of Commons and four senators. I may say that I represent in my constituency more people than there are in the whole of Prince Edward Island. I represent nearly 125,000.

In our section of the country we are perfectly satisfied with the pact of confederation, and I suggest that if we study it carefully we shall find that it was very largely a matter of give and take. There were many sensibilities that might have been offended, and there was room for friction, racial and religious; but the fathers of confederation found it possible to build their structure, and they builded better than they knew. They built, not on quicksand but on understanding, an understanding of what true Canadianism is.

In that regard I am fully in agreement with the hon. member for Charlevoix-Saguenay. While members from Quebec put the case for that province as forcefully as they can, so far as federal representation is concerned, I suggest that they must see to it that equity and justice shall prevail not only in the interests of Quebec but for the representation of the country as a whole.

I make that statement deliberately because I was astonished in 1943—and if I had not been Deputy Speaker I would have said a few words prior to the passing of the resolution—when the Quebec legislature passed a resolution indicating fear that there might be some injustice in connection with the redistribution measure which would be placed before parliament. I stated a few days ago here that in my opinion every member of this house is primarily what I call a municipalist, because primarily every member is proud of his own locality, the towns and cities in his own district. There exists, for example, a rivalry between Hamilton and Toronto—I cannot profess to know a great deal about Toronto, however; between Toronto and Montreal, between Halifax and Vancouver, and in my opinion that is a healthy state of affairs. Second, I suggested

[Mr. Bradette.]

that we are provincialists, every one of us, because everyone of us is proud to belong to his individual province and would be the last to allow this federal government to impinge upon and be unfair to that province in respect of any question affecting its interests. That is why I was surprised at that resolution, although I know that it was proposed in good faith.

I wish to say a few words with regard to the fine presentation made by the hon. member for Chicoutimi (Mr. Gagnon). I cannot agree with some of the statements that he took occasion to make. For instance, he said that financially speaking—those are practically his words—we were in bankruptcy. The hon. member knows much better than that. He knows that this country is not bankrupt; the allies are not bankrupt. It is true we have a huge national debt, but we have preserved our natural resources. But more than that, we have the finest, most industrious and intelligent population in the world. With that great asset we do not need to worry about the future. If the activities of our population are directed through the proper channels we shall not need to worry about the future. I resent the statement very much.

On many occasions it has been said that my French-speaking compatriots of the province of Quebec are hewers of wood and drawers of water for the rest of the population. If that were so, Mr. Speaker, and if we are in a state of bankruptcy, then we are all starting in from scratch and the people who make those statements should be happy that we are in that position. But it is not true and it cannot be true so far as Canada is concerned. If our efforts are directed in the post-war period as they were to the winning of the war we shall not have any bankruptcy in Canada; we can be positive of that. I make that statement to show how careful our compatriots ought to be in making statements of that kind, whether they be made on the floor of the House of Commons or in a provincial forum.

When we come to the matter of redistribution, perhaps we shall have to make some further amendments. Like the hon. member for Rosthern (Mr. Tucker), I should like to see Canada in a position where it could deal with that matter itself. I say that not because I have any resentment against the British government. The British government and people would be most happy if we were to deal with all of our own domestic affairs and political problems. There is no doubt about that.

With regard to the question of representation, there exists a certain amount of danger. I well remember when I lived in Quebec in