

As for the projections for 2001, I don't think Senator MacEachen should be so pessimistic as to refuse to consider the possibility that his party would be back in power by that time and could amend the legislation accordingly, circumstances permitting. I think it was rather amusing to hear Senator MacEachen say that the present government might be thinking of calling an election on the basis of the 1971 census figures. When the last Liberal government called the 1984 election, it was not based on the 1981 census. Everything was ready. It was up to the Liberal government to give the new electoral boundaries force of law. It did not. What did it have in mind? I think it takes a lot of imagination to accuse the present government of having partisan intentions with this bill. What does a party have to gain by providing that the House of Commons will have only 295 members in the next election instead of 310 if the election is held in 1988 or even later? No one can accuse the government of having sinister or partisan intentions in this respect.

If we look at the figures in the tables appearing in the *Debates of the Senate* of December 18, 1985, we see that the smaller provinces will increase their representation proportionally during those years. They are not losing out in any case. Ontario and Quebec are the losers. Alberta is losing, proportionally, one-tenth of one per cent, for the information of Senator Fairbairn. Nothing in these figures suggests any injustice or inequity exists with respect to any of the provinces.

The only valid argument that can be raised would be that they are in favour of a larger representation in the House of Commons. Senator Stewart did not go that far, he was satisfied with getting three more ridings. But then, if we do give his province three more ridings, we will have to give something more to the others. That would be starting from scratch, back to square one, and there would be no end to it.

The 1974 formula is the brainchild of Senator MacEachen, if I may put it that way. I can easily understand why he would be in favour of it. He pointed out that all parties had endorsed his formula. Just fine, but is that an argument? Perhaps it is, if only to show that the opposition then was more reasonable

than it is today. Perhaps in those days the opposition did not try to trip the government on every single issue. That may be the difference.

Once again I want to emphasize that the arguments made by Senators Stewart, MacEachen, Corbin and Fairbairn do not really amount to much, unless they seek to increase the number of seats in the House of Commons.

If we claim to take something away from a province, we must keep in mind that the balance is restored through the existing formula, for it guarantees a higher proportion if not larger representation. The regional balance is what really matters.

If you attempt to thwart the principle of proportional representation in addition to the senatorial compensation, all I can say is that you are opening a debate which will never end.

Had Senator Stewart been successful in getting his amendment through we would have had to adopt another one to correct such or such anomaly, and the end would be nowhere in sight.

In all fairness, honourable senators, unless we want the number of seats in the House of Commons to increase and multiply—not a good principle under the circumstances, I am sure—we must consider that nobody will be slighted under the principle contained in this bill and nobody will be treated unfairly.

Motion agreed to and bill read third time and passed, on division.

[*English*]

ADJOURNMENT

Leave having been given to revert to Notices of Motions:

Hon. Orville H. Phillips: Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 45(1)(g), I move:

That when the Senate adjourns today, it do stand adjourned until Tuesday, March 4, 1986, at 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

Motion agreed to.

The Senate adjourned until Tuesday, March 4, 1986, at 2 p.m.