

of facing their responsibilities and dealing with them as true representatives of the Canadian people, even under the difficult circumstances which are facing us to-day. This resolution really states that the representatives of the people in the House of Commons are incapable of dealing properly with an important problem in the troubled days through which we are passing. It is to the discredit of members of parliament to have it asserted and established in a resolution of this kind that we in this parliament cannot, without fighting like wildcats, adjust our representation as reasonable men who are ready to understand each other. I cannot subscribe to such a theory.

What are the reasons given? First, the war. Have we not since the beginning of the war been dealing with problems just as important as this one? We had the plebiscite which was capable of upsetting the friendly relations and good understanding among all citizens of Canada. We went through that without any trouble; we went through that like men capable of understanding each other's point of view. But too often we are postponing and postponing such questions until the war is over. Why are we here? Why do we not go home if we cannot deal properly with this problem? Other dominions, such as South Africa, are facing even general elections. It is much more dangerous to fight a general election, as they are doing in South Africa and as they have done in Ireland, than to adjust our representation in the House of Commons. It is ten times more difficult. That is not the reason.

Then it is said that because of enlistments the population of certain provinces has been reduced. But, sir, men who have enlisted have been registered as being in their constituencies in 1941. They have not been registered in England or in any other part of Canada, but only at the place of their residence. Then changes on account of employment is given as a reason. Most men who have left one province to work temporarily in another were registered before they made their move. They will not be handicapped. We would not proceed as conditions are in 1943, but on the situation existing in June, 1941. At that time very few men had migrated to other provinces to obtain work.

All that was known on January 28, when this session began. We were at war when the speech from the throne announced that we were to have redistribution. On two occasions in May last we were told by the Prime Minister, and even later on, on May 31, by the Minister of Mines and Resources

(Mr. Crerar), that we were to have redistribution. Were we not at war then? We were at war then, and the arguments that are being advanced now were just as strong in January and in May as they are to-day. I say that those arguments are of no value.

Then it is said that it would delay the session. Why did we not start in January? Why did we not appoint a committee to deal with redistribution in the first days of February? The report would have been before us long ago, and we would now be in position to deal properly with redistribution without doing any injustice to any province or to any division. But no, we delayed and we delayed and we delayed until the argument could be advanced that it was too late to proceed.

It is said also that there would be at this time strongly divergent views. When we have a redistribution after the war, as it has been pointed out this afternoon, it will be based upon the decennial census of 1941; it will not be based upon the situation that will exist after the war or after those who may have temporarily migrated, return to their former places of residence. The resolution says in so many words that the redistribution will be based upon the decennial census of 1941, and those provinces which are likely to lose seats by redistribution will be faced with the same situation. That is what will happen unless—I do not use this phrase in an offensive way—there is a nigger in the woodpile; unless there is a general election before the end of the war.

If there is a general election before the end of the war, those provinces which are exposed to a loss of seats will be able to preserve them, and preserve them until the next decennial census which will be made in 1951. The province of Quebec, which has a fixed number of sixty-five seats, will still remain in the same unfair position. That province is supposed to be the regulator of the representation, but year after year it has been a regulator that regulates absolutely nothing. When it comes to the application of the rule there is always an exception made. Means are always found of avoiding its application and Quebec continues to have only sixty-five members. The maritime provinces continue to have the small number they have at the present time, while other provinces enjoy a larger number of representatives to which, strictly speaking, they are not entitled.

So far as I am concerned I would have been ready to consider redistribution in the broadest sense possible. One reason has been given which appeals to me. There are members of the House of Commons who have