

PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION
OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND IN
THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

MOTION.

Hon. Mr. PROWSE moved:

That an humble address be presented to His Royal Highness the Governor General, praying that Your Royal Highness will be pleased to transmit the following address to His Most Excellent Majesty the King, as follows:
His Most Excellent Majesty the King:

We, your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Senate of Canada in Parliament assembled, desire most earnestly in our own name and on behalf of the people whom we represent, to renew the expression of our unswerving loyalty and devotion to your Majesty's person or Government.

We would respectfully represent to your Majesty that at a general election in Prince Edward Island held in the year 1873 A.D. upon the question of the entry of that Island into the Dominion of Canada it was clearly understood that the Island should for all time have a representation of not less than six members in the House of Commons of Canada.

And that the electors of the Island at that election voted in favour of becoming a province of this Dominion on the clear and distinct understanding that the new province should for all time, be so represented by not less than six members in the House of Commons.

And that in drafting the terms upon which Prince Edward Island should become part of this Dominion, the proviso with regard to a permanent representation of not less than six members in the House of Commons was through inadvertence or mistake omitted to be inserted.

And that by reason of such omission the province of Prince Edward Island has from time to time been reduced in her representation in the House of Commons, until now her representation therein has been reduced by half.

We would respectfully request your Majesty to be graciously pleased to give your consent to submitting a measure to the Parliament of the United Kingdom to amend certain provisions of the British North America Act, 1867, and any Act amending the same or any Order in Council or terms or conditions of union made or approved under the said Acts or any Acts of the Parliament of Canada. In such a manner that the province of Prince Edward Island shall, in accordance with the understanding upon which that province agreed to become a part of the Dominion of Canada, be henceforth represented in the House of Commons of Canada by not less than six members, being two from each county of said province.

All of which we humbly pray your Majesty to take into your favourable and gracious consideration.

He said: I have several objects in view in bringing this matter before this honourable House. While it has been threshed out once or twice on the floor of this Chamber, and at some great length at different times during the last twenty years in the Lower House, the grievance of Prince Edward Island has never been corrected. All those

Hon. Mr. PROWSE.

who have looked into the matter and taken the trouble to study it up, know well enough that an error was made by the Fathers of Confederation. When Prince Edward Island entered Confederation, six years after the British North America Act was compiled, she went in with the distinct understanding that she should have at least six members in the House of Commons for all time to come. I do not know who is responsible for the mistake, and I do not intend to attempt to find out, but I will endeavour to prove that there was a mistake made, and the mistake was made by both sides. The different telegrams and correspondence in connection with the contract then made, between the Dominion of Canada and Prince Edward Island, all proved beyond a doubt that the intention of the framers of that contract was that Prince Edward Island was to have six members for all time. Had the members then constituting the Dominion of Canada told the representatives of Prince Edward Island, "Well gentlemen we will concede you six representatives, but after ten years, or possibly two decades, we will reduce it to five, possibly four, and then eventually take all your representation away," do you think these men for one moment would have consented to Prince Edward Island coming into Confederation? I say we would remain to-day a province governing ourselves, and never would have formed part of the Dominion of Canada under those conditions. The reason I want to make the statement I am making is this, a lot of the older men in the Senate had heard this question threshed out time and again, but we have many new senators who have come in lately, and who are not acquainted with the facts of the case. The men who came up here to assist in the forming of the union of Prince Edward Island were not straw men—they were men of ability. We have not any abler men to-day. I know the names of these men, and some of the older members of this House will be familiar with them; names such as Hon. J. C. Pope, Mr. Haviland, Mr. Howlan, Mr. Hensley, Hon. Mr. Duncan, Robt. Haythorne, and Ed. Palmer are familiar to all hon. gentlemen. Do hon. members suppose for one moment that those men would come up here, and then go back with a contract which permitted their representation to be reduced and reduced again? Do hon. gentlemen think you could have found a man on either side of politics that would have stood for it? Now when it is clear that an