

this resolution. That is the reason why we ask the majority why it has not presented a resolution or made a suggestion of the kind I am about to submit. If it is not deemed proper under present circumstances to make this redistribution, then why might we not suggest an amendment to the constitution by a process which would not have been a breach of principle, and which would have ensured that Quebec be given a number of seats sufficient to equalize her representation with that of other provinces. That would have satisfied all those who do not want to lose representation; it would have protected the rights of all, and it would have meant an equal distribution of representation for Quebec. This would have been fair, but no one has thought of such a means to adjust the situation, a process which would have been fair to all.

Before concluding my remarks, may I make an appeal to all hon. members asking them to consider carefully the dangers contained in this measure to the constitution and unity of Canada. In the past we have seen some bigotry, and there are still some behind the scenes who take a narrow view. Yet, in the past there have been men who at the proper time would raise their voices—I think of Baldwin, MacNab and Macdonald. There have been men in times past, men whose names are famous and glorious to-day. And it is my hope that there will be men in this House of Commons to-day who will seek to show the injustice contained within this resolution, and who will be careful and prudent enough to see that the unity of Canada is not threatened by this injustice.

Hon. P. J. ARTHUR CARDIN (Richelieu-Verchères): Mr. Speaker, the resolution now being considered by the house contains in my humble judgment a dangerous procedure to which the House of Commons should give serious consideration before adopting it in the form in which it has been couched on the order paper. For a number of years it has been admitted in all branches of public opinion that no serious change should be made in the British North America Act without the consent and approval of the parties to the contract. I admit that in the past the federal parliament has been dealing from the point of view of its own authority, and has been amending the British North America Act without consulting the provinces which are a party to that contract. But I repeat that that at least within the last few years the opinion has developed throughout Canada that the British North America Act should be considered as a sacred contract among associates, those associates

[Mr. Roy.]

being the provinces, and that nothing should be done to modify it without the approval of the contracting parties.

We have had that experience when we have dealt with the necessary amendments to permit the federal authority to deal with unemployment insurance legislation. There are many other instances in which, before making any move, we have consulted the different provinces composing the Dominion of Canada. To-day we are going to touch upon one of the fundamentals of the British North America Act without consulting the provinces, and despite the protests made by at least one province.

I claim that it is a breach of our promise, and that not only are we not dealing properly with Quebec, but also with regard to other small English-speaking provinces. I make that statement because some small English-speaking provinces will be affected by the result of the application of the principle embodied in this resolution.

English-speaking provinces in Canada have been suffering in their representation in the House of Commons by the application of the principles laid down in the British North America Act. They stood it; they accepted it, because they wanted to respect the principle that was the corner-stone of our understanding and of our existence as a dominion. Ontario, herself, accepted a reduction in her representation in the House of Commons when, following a census, the number of her representatives was reduced. The maritime provinces, more than any other of the provinces of Canada, have suffered. They accepted the reduction until such time as it was quite apparent that the reduction being imposed upon them was too great and would interfere with the proper representation of those provinces in the House of Commons. There was a limit fixed in order to prevent the representation of those provinces in the House of Commons from going below a certain number. That is to their advantage now. Now, other provinces, fearing the application of the principle laid down in the British North America Act, are trying to preserve their representation in the House of Commons when the maritime provinces have lost theirs.

This is not fair to Quebec or to the other provinces whose representation has been fixed or which has been reduced by the application of the British North America Act. This should not be done.

I have no patience with the reasons given in the resolution. They do not appeal to me at all. They should not appeal to any assembly of responsible men, of men capable