

provinces. I said nothing about unanimous consent. The provinces in consultation would agree upon whatever procedure they thought best.

Mr. MICHAUD: Who is to determine what is material?

An hon. MEMBER: Apparently you are.

Mr. LOW: That is the responsibility of the members of this house, and that is what, I take it, we are now doing. I submit that it would be a simple matter to refer to subject of the present resolution to the provinces before the next election is held; that is, of course, unless the government has some secret plans to hold an election earlier than some of us think. We all hope that the dominion-provincial conference will reconvene at an early date; certainly it should reconvene before another election takes place. The whole matter of the procedure for making any change in the British North America Act should then be referred to the provinces and the dominion in their conference for their agreement, rather than that their agenda should be confined to financial references only.

I must emphasize that I do not wish to delay redistribution. Neither I nor the members of my group in this house have any such intention. I think this parliament will have to deal with it; I am speaking now of the twentieth parliament. But I am opposed to any frenzied haste in doing the job, haste such as we saw here in connection with the Dominion day resolution and the Bretton Woods arrangements, amongst others. There is time, I submit, to refer this whole matter to the provinces in session with the dominion before any election needs to be held. Let me suggest also, in fact let me emphasize that we cannot hope to bring about unity in Canada by allowing the federal government to go over the heads of the provinces and to do that consistently and constantly. No one can argue successfully that there is not need for unifying influences in the country, influences which will improve the relationships amongst the provinces so as to achieve something like unity of our people.

Before I close, let me say one word through you, Mr. Speaker, to my friends from the province of Quebec. Your province, it is true, stands to gain most as a result of the bill which will be brought in as the result of this resolution. That being the case, it seems to me that you are in the best position to give a real object lesson to the Dominion of Canada. You are in a position, by supporting a request to have this whole matter referred to the dominion-provincial confer-

[Mr. Low.]

ence for consultation, to assist in bringing about real unity in this dominion, rather than hasten into something about which some of you may later have time to feel somewhat badly. There will come a time, I am sure, when, if we now lay down one more good argument for parliament to use in future, an argument based upon precedent, you will be faced with something which may cause you to rue the day when you passed this resolution without giving due thought to consultation with the provinces. Members from the province of Quebec have an opportunity now to strike a blow for unity and good feeling amongst the people of this country.

May I just add that I am not supporting the Conservative party in supporting their amendment, or, indeed, any party; I am trying to be consistent with the beliefs which I have always held and with the principles for which social credit stands. I find myself under the necessity of supporting the amendment which was proposed by the hon. member for Lake Centre (Mr. Diefenbaker), solely because it coincides with my belief, but in doing so I would make it abundantly clear that should we be unable to convince hon. members from the province of Quebec that it is their duty not to rush into this thing with undue haste, and therefore the amendment be defeated, I shall have to give support to the resolution of the Minister of Justice (Mr. St. Laurent).

Mr. LIGUORI LACOMBE (Laval-Two Mountains) (Translation): Mr. Speaker, the proposal now submitted to parliament for approval evinces consummate skill. Its sponsor has forestalled any possible opposition to the measure. He has assuaged the feelings of the people from all parts of this country. This proposal provides for an increase from 245 to 255 in the number of representatives in the House of Commons. For that purpose, he requests that section 51 of the British North America Act, 1867, be repealed and that the following be substituted therefor:

1. Section fifty-one of the British North America Act, 1867, is hereby repealed and the following substituted therefor:

51. (1) The number of members of the House of Commons shall be two hundred and fifty-five and the representation of the provinces therein shall forthwith upon the coming into force of this section and thereafter on the completion of each decennial census be readjusted by such authority, in such manner, and from such time as the parliament of Canada from time to time provides, subject and according to the following rules:

1. Subject as hereinafter provided, there shall be assigned to each of the provinces a number of members computed by dividing the total population of the provinces by two hundred and fifty-four and by dividing the population of each