

*Redistribution—Mr. Rhodes*

resentation in the House of Commons than in the Senate; and therefore recommend and report that an humble address should be presented to His Majesty praying; That the British North America Act, 1867, be amended by the enactment of the following section:—

51 (A) Notwithstanding anything in this act a province shall always be entitled to a number of members in the House of Commons not less than the number of Senators representing such province.

I hope I shall not be accused of immodesty if I say that I was the author of that amendment. It was moved by me finally for this reason: that after all the representations had been made on behalf of Prince Edward Island and the other provinces with respect to the representation of the maritime provinces it was felt that the committee could not properly recommend that those provinces have restored to them their original number of members; but it was felt, as this report indicates, that it was incongruous that there should be a larger representation in the Senate than in the House of Commons in any province, hence this amendment. And I may say to my hon. friend had it not been for that amendment Prince Edward Island would now have two members instead of four; in other words, it has double the representation to-day that it otherwise would have.

The province of New Brunswick has now reached the irreducible minimum of ten members as a result of that amendment. It is true that the people of the maritime provinces very greatly regret that their representation in this house is smaller numerically than it was at the time of confederation, or after confederation for that matter; for, as pointed out by my hon. friend from Shelburne-Yarmouth, we had at one time as many as twenty-one members from the province of Nova Scotia. Yet as a matter of history we must not lose sight of this fact which had very considerable weight with the committee of that day, that although the House of Commons is very important, perhaps the most important branch of parliament apart from His Majesty's representative, we must remember that parliament consists, in addition to the representative of His Majesty, of the Senate and the House of Commons; and that the Senate has just as much voice in matters of legislation as the House of Commons. And whatever the position may be as far as representation in the House of Commons is concerned as between confederation and to-day, we have, not only in the province of Nova Scotia, but in each of the maritime provinces, the same representation in the Senate now as we had in 1867. Furthermore this fact

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must be borne in mind, that to a very great extent there is a community of interest between the historic province of Quebec and the maritime provinces; and there are twenty-four senators allotted to the maritime provinces under the constitution and twenty-four to the province of Quebec. Thus we have in those two older provinces of Canada half the Senate representation of Canada. Furthermore, to present that in a still more striking way, it may be said we have to-day as many senators in the maritime provinces as in the whole area west of the great lakes. That is a contributing factor of very great importance in maintaining to the people of the maritime provinces and the eastern part of Canada their opportunity to have full voice in the parliament of Canada. I may say it was one consideration which weighed with me very greatly in concurring in the report of the committee on redistribution in 1914.

There is much more that I could say, but my purpose in rising was only that of making one or two observations in reply to my hon. friend from Shelburne-Yarmouth, and I shall be content with that for the moment.

Mr. RALSTON: What I pointed out to my hon. friend with regard to Digby-Clare was that his leader had protested that they were anxious to avoid dismembering counties, and that the underlying principle which caused this particular redistribution was the desire to avoid doing so. I pointed out, and I reiterate it, that under a Conservative government in 1914 Clare was first taken from Digby. My hon. friend says the committee consented, but the government was in power, and we have heard enough these days to know it has control—

Mr. BENNETT: But it was a committee of the house that consented. It was done by consent of all parties.

Mr. RHODES: Does my hon. friend suggest that the government of the day throttled the hon. member for Pictou?

Mr. RALSTON: I am not suggesting that; I am pointing out what was done in regard to Clare, and I say it falls strangely from the lips of the right hon. leader of the government to suggest that they are not dismembering the county, yet the 1914 redistribution was the first time Clare was taken from Digby. I am pointing out that this is the second time, in spite of the fact that the right hon. leader of the government says that they are not dismembering counties, and that they want to preserve county lines. My hon. friend is ingenious, as he always is; he says: "Oh, by