

haps it was precisely because the fair-minded people of Saskatchewan were offended by that encroachment upon the constitution that they defeated more Liberal candidates at the last election.

Here we are discussing legal subtleties, citing a section here and a paragraph there, a subsection here and a subparagraph there, so the whole thing has to be examined with a magnifying glass to see where is the legal light hiding under the bushel. Let us be more practical than that. Let us stand by the constitution, or let us change it entirely—and let us do the work ourselves here at Ottawa, not have it done outside. It is an absurd situation, as has been described by all hon. gentlemen who have spoken before me, including my good friend the Minister of Justice. The situation is absurd, but it will not be absurd any longer once we have the guts to correct it.

It has been suggested to the mover of the motion that it should be addressed to parliament instead of to the government. That is a little too Philadelphian for me. The purpose of the motion is to ask the support of the house in pressing upon the government the urgency of such a redistribution. One has only to read the motion to understand it.

The complaint has also been made that this motion is brought in before the estimates have been considered. It is obvious that there is a good reason for that, because once we start to consider the estimates, private members' days will be over and no such motion as this could be brought before the house.

As my good friend the Minister of Justice has spoken on the subject in such an unprejudiced and unbiased way, and considers it as being above partisan considerations, I hope that a redistribution will be brought in by the government before the end of this session. In 1943 the Prime Minister said that we would have a redistribution. It was mentioned in the speech from the throne that year, but we had none. This year the government have said that we cannot have a redistribution. I hope that the reverse of what happened in 1943 will take place and that the government will give us a pleasant surprise before the end of the session by bringing in a redistribution measure. It is very easy; the thing is most simple. The government has only to appoint a committee to study the past redistribution act and correct it in accordance with the last census. Otherwise where shall we go?

You know, sir, that we have some powers by virtue of the constitution, and those powers are completed by other statutes passed by this parliament. The first of these is the redistribution statute establishing the bound-

aries of the constituencies, the polling stations and where the electors shall vote. There is also the Senate and House of Commons Act and some other acts, but the Senate and House of Commons Act applies for the most part after the member is elected by virtue of the redistribution act and the elections act. The elections act has been improved a lot. The only thing wrong with regard to the election of members of parliament is the Redistribution Act. Let us correct it in order that there shall be no complaint about any member of parliament who sits in this house.

To conclude, sir, I sincerely hope that this government will reconsider, not its decision, because no definite decision has been reached, but its views on this matter. I hope the government will reconsider it in due course and give a good example of complying with the law.

Mr. W. A. TUCKER (Rosthern): Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to detain the house very long, but one or two things have been said in this debate on which as a member from Saskatchewan I wish to make some comment.

The original provision of the British North America Act, as has been stated, was based upon the idea that there should be representation by population, but because of the provision that was put in the act in section 51, subsection 4, and the interpretation placed upon it by the privy council, which has already been referred to by the Minister of Justice (Mr. St. Laurent), a great discrepancy has crept into our representation. As I pointed out to the house in February, 1943, if a redistribution were made on the basis of the present act the only provinces which would have representation on the basis of population would be Quebec, British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. In other words, as has been pointed out, Prince Edward Island would have two more members than she was entitled to, Nova Scotia would have one more, New Brunswick would have one more, Ontario eight more, and Alberta one more.

I have no quarrel at all with the provision giving a minimum representation to provinces like Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, for this reason, that in Saskatchewan particularly we are beginning to run into the very thing that makes some such minimum requirement fair. The basis of the redistribution is the population of the province of Quebec, and we find that as Quebec rapidly increases in population, the unit of representation is rapidly rising, so that to-day it is 51,213. In provinces like Quebec or Ontario, where there are large cities, certain seats in the cities can be given much larger populations