

Mr. J. J. HUGHES (Kings, P.E.I.): As a member from the Maritime Provinces, and coming from Prince Edward Island, I am, of course, very much interested in the resolutions before the House; and I must say I regret that the Government has not seen its way clear to provide that the representation from the island province should be six instead of four. When this subject was before the Redistribution Committee last session several delegations came from the province of Prince Edward Island and placed before that committee the views of the province in connection with this matter. I think they also presented those views to the Government, but of that I am not quite certain. However, I know that the Prime Minister was quite familiar with the arguments that these gentlemen presented, because he referred to them in this House. These men were quite familiar with the subject, they were representative men from our province; one of them was the Premier and Attorney General of the province, the other was Mr. Stewart, now Judge Stewart, and the right hon. the Prime Minister, in referring to their arguments, stated that they had presented their case clearly, cogently and forcibly.

I am sorry that they failed to make an impression on the Prime Minister; it would have been much better to have met the views of these gentlemen than merely to have flattered them for their arguments. However, as the right hon. gentleman is not disposed to meet their views, and as the right hon. leader of the Opposition states that in his opinion the present proposal is a fair compromise, I presume that we cannot do better than accept it. I must put in the proviso, however, that we will not accept this as closing the door entirely; we retain the privilege of bringing the question up at any time when we think it may receive more favourable consideration. I am glad to hear the Prime Minister say that the latter part of the resolution, which relates to the representation of this Chamber, will, if necessary, be separated from the other part of the resolution in order that the proposal particularly affecting Prince Edward Island may become legislation this session. But I want to ask the right hon. Prime Minister if he is quite sure that the procedure which he is adopting is the proper procedure. I am not learned in the law, and in saying this, I present not my own view, but the view of Judge Stewart, who gave a written opinion that this is an entirely improper procedure.

[Sir Robert Borden.]

At the time he gave this opinion he was a barrister in Charlottetown; later a vacancy occurred on the bench and the Government thought so much of his legal knowledge and ability that they appointed him to fill that position. Judge Stewart was one of the delegates who came here to argue this question before the Redistribution Committee and the Government. He came with Premier Mathieson, and I think I am justified in saying that Judge Stewart's opinion and Premier Mathieson's would be identically the same on this question. In our province this has been and is a very live question. I was accused of not being quite orthodox in the matter; of not being favourable to the views that were entertained and upheld very strongly in Prince Edward Island. I think the right hon. Prime Minister was instrumental, to a considerable extent, in circulating that opinion, because he referred to a speech I made in 1903 in which he said that I used arguments that gave him great trouble—particularly that I used the word "oversight" instead of "unforseen"—when he wanted to do something for Prince Edward Island. I had to combat that idea, and in a letter to the press I pointed out that in the session of 1906 and again in the session of 1907, I had moved a resolution identical in principle with the resolution that is now before the committee: that an address be presented to the King asking him to submit a measure to the Imperial Parliament to amend the British North America Act so that no province of the Dominion should have fewer representatives in this Chamber than it had when it entered Confederation. In 1907

I introduced a similar resolution, asking that an address be presented to His Imperial Majesty praying him to submit a measure to the Imperial Parliament providing that no one of the maritime provinces should have fewer representatives in this Chamber than the number that was assigned to it when it entered Confederation. In principle this resolution is identical with the one now before the committee. I will read to the committee the opinion of Judge Stewart, to which I have referred. Referring to the letter which I wrote to the press, he says:

In this letter he asserts that in the session of 1906 he moved for a resolution for an address to the King to have the British North America Act amended so that no province should have at any time fewer representatives in Parliament than it was given when it entered the Confederation, and failing in this the follow-