

Newfoundland

house, but he could tell his fellow members about emergencies.

Mr. Hackett: He was resting at that time.

Mr. Knowles: He can tell his fellow members what he thinks of the use of that word "emergency". All of us who were here on both of those occasions know the reason in the main for the parties taking the stand that they did. The interest was in the end result to be achieved.

Mr. Graydon: The interest was in the war, and you know it.

Mr. Knowles: My genial and hon. friend (Mr. Graydon) knows very well—

Mr. Graydon: And so do you.

Mr. Knowles: —that, had redistribution been put through before 1945, the result would have been a decrease in the number of seats in the province of Ontario.

Mr. Hackett: For the C.C.F.

Mr. Knowles: No, in the total number of seats allotted to the province; so he and his party were quite prepared to agree to a postponement of redistribution, even though it involved an amendment to the constitution by means of a simple majority vote in this house.

I want to say a further word, Mr. Speaker, about the remarks made by the hon. member for Lake Centre (Mr. Diefenbaker). During the course of his speech, if I heard him correctly, he said that his party has taken this position right from confederation down to the present day. He quoted back only as far as 1946, however. But some of us can remember back to 1943, when the opposite stand was taken.

May I say a further word about my hon. friends to my left—the Social Credit group—who are telling us that they do not like us to characterize their attitude as the balkanization of Canada. They say that down through the years they have been consistent in their attitude on this question. But the facts are that in 1943 the Social Credit party voted with the rest of us for an amendment to the British North America Act by the simple means of a majority vote in this House of Commons. Come 1946, and this house had before it, on the same kind of motion, the amendment moved by the hon. member for Lake Centre. At that time my hon. friends in the Social Credit party voted for that amendment, which asked that redistribution be postponed until the government had had satisfactory consultations with the provinces. Then, lo and behold, after that amendment had been defeated, after they had demanded consultation with the provinces, they turned around and split with their Tory friends and voted for the motion, which

helped to achieve an amendment to the British North America Act by the simple process of a majority vote in this House of Commons.

I have already referred to the fact that there are some Liberals who are equally inconsistent; because there were a number of them in 1943 who, when redistribution was being postponed, did not like it. A number of them, including my good friend the hon. member for Temiscouata (Mr. Pouliot), voted against it. In 1946 the Liberals turned around the other way, and all of them were quite prepared to vote for redistribution by the simple process of a majority vote in the House of Commons.

I suppose I should complete the record and say what our own party did on those occasions, although I am sure that if I set out to do so someone will interject and say that I am trying to hand bouquets to ourselves. But the fact is that we voted the same way both times, and intend to do so again this time. We voted for the amendment in 1943 even though it might have been said at that time that it was to our political advantage. We took the same stand and voted for the same principle in 1946, even though at that time it might have been regarded as being to our political disadvantage.

The points that I am trying to make in all of this, Mr. Speaker, are two in number. On the one hand, it seems to me that we should try to achieve some consistency in the stands we take in this house. I have collected a few old volumes of *Hansard* since the hon. member for Lake Centre spoke before the dinner recess, and there was one other I should like to have found if I had had the time. It is an ancient volume in which a former leader of the Progressive Conservative party—

Mr. Cruickshank: Which one?

Mr. Knowles: —the late Lord Bennett, made a statement with regard to parties and members who say one thing at one time and something else at another. It is a classic from the lips of the late Lord Bennett, to the effect that the people of this country expect something better of their public men than that, that they expect all of us to be consistent in the stands that we take.

The other point I wish to emphasize is the one with which I started out, and on which I find myself agreeing with the hon. member for Calgary West (Mr. Smith). This whole business brings into bold relief the necessity for proceeding with the proposal made by the Prime Minister in his radio address not long ago: the necessity of finding a formula by means of which we make clear just how our