

are to be taken out of the group of twenty-four assigned to the maritime provinces. So we are now creating practically a new group of senators applicable to the western country. British Columbia has three senators and Manitoba four. Now it would be quite proper that we should give to that western group probably twenty-four senators, but it does not seem to me it would be proper at the present time to give to these new provinces out of the twenty-four more than one-half. We are giving them at present one-half, at all events. It may be that when the group numbers twenty-four there will need to be a redistribution, and that we shall have to give some further representation in the Senate to British Columbia and Manitoba. For the present I think we are dealing generously with the new provinces when we assign to them one-half of the whole group.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. I take objection to the statement of the Minister of Justice. He says there is to-day a maritime group, a Quebec group, an Ontario group and a western group. Why not go further and say that as there are three groups in the east there should be three groups in the west, and make provision for it? There ought to be a maritime group to cover British Columbia, and there ought to be an inland group outside of British Columbia, and another group covering Manitoba.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. You will have a more numerous Senate than you have now.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. We will have a fair representation in the Senate. The Minister of Justice got away from the case when he said there were to be three groups in the east and only one group in the west.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. I stated the policy of the government.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. It is not a fair policy, and I wish to direct the attention of the member for Beauharnois (Mr. Bergeron) to that policy. He seemed to have the view that there should only be four groups. Now if the west grows and becomes the preponderating element in the confederation, there ought to be three groups.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. When it is so entitled we will deal with it.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. The hon. member for Qu'Appelle (Mr. Lake) is very properly putting in a plea for protection to the west. I dissent from the idea that there should be only four groups, let there be as many groups as will give a fair representation all round.

Mr. BERGERON. I do not quite agree with my hon. friend from South York (Mr. W. F. Maclean). We all expect a very large population in the Northwest. Repre-

Mr. FITZPATRICK.

sentation in this House is based upon the population of Quebec; but it may come about a few years hence that the majority of the members of this House will come from the Northwest, and that is the reason why I want to preserve to the east its due influence in the Senate. I think that is what the spirit of confederation requires, that there should be a kind of tempering element in the Senate composed of all these groups. The provinces in the Northwest will be entitled to as many members as their population will entitle them to, but there will always be enough senators in these different groups to see that the supremacy is not altogether held by the Northwest provinces.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. Let us not dispute in advance with what we have nothing to do at present. The question is, how many senators shall we take for these two new provinces? We provide for giving them each six as the maximum. Manitoba has four senators, British Columbia has three; we cannot increase the number for Manitoba nor can we increase the number for British Columbia. Under such circumstances when, on the one side of the new provinces there are three senators and on the other side four, it seems to me that in giving to each of the new provinces six as a maximum, we go as far as we ought to go at present. But this is only a temporary arrangement. In my estimation we will have to have a new group of senators, not now, but in the future; and when we form this new group we must remember that in order to keep within the spirit of the constitution we cannot base that group upon representation by population, the idea of population must be eliminated. The Senate, as it exists, is not based upon population but upon purely arbitrary considerations having in view minorities; and that the great provinces should not override the smaller ones. That was the idea of confederation and we must adhere to it. If we keep to the spirit of the constitution, as we ought to do, and if we form another group, it will be a fair question whether there should be twenty-four senators in it or not. In my estimation it ought to be twenty-four. But the west may become so large that twenty-four senators will not be sufficient. Still we must adhere to the spirit of confederation that the big provinces are not to override the smaller ones. But for the present I think everybody admits that we are doing for these new provinces as much as we are called upon to do, in view of the fact that we cannot increase the number of senators for Manitoba and British Columbia.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. The right hon. First Minister, in the statement which he has made, loses sight of the principle that each state of the American Union has two senators.