

Subsection 4.—The House of Commons*

In Sect. 37 of the original British North America Act of 1867 (30 Vict., c. 3), it is provided that "The House of Commons shall . . . consist of one hundred and eighty-one members, of whom eighty-two shall be elected for Ontario, sixty-five for Quebec, nineteen for Nova Scotia and fifteen for New Brunswick". Further, under Sect. 51, it is enacted that after the completion of the Census of 1871 and of each subsequent decennial census, the representation of the four provinces should be readjusted by such authority, in such manner, and from such time, as the Parliament of Canada provided, subject to and according to the following rules:—

- "(1) Quebec shall have the fixed number of Sixty-five Members;
- "(2) There shall be assigned to each of the other Provinces such a Number of Members as will bear the same Proportion to the Number of its Population (ascertained at such Census) as the Number Sixty-five bears to the Number of the Population of Quebec (so ascertained);
- "(3) In the Computation of the Number of Members for a Province a fractional Part not exceeding One Half of the whole Number requisite for entitling the Province to a Member shall be disregarded; but a fractional Part exceeding One Half of that Number shall be equivalent to the whole Number;
- "(4) On any such Re-adjustment the Number of Members for a Province shall not be reduced unless the Proportion which the Number of the Population of the Province bore to the Number of the aggregate Population of Canada at the then last preceding Re-adjustment of the Number of Members for the Province is ascertained at the then latest Census to be diminished by One Twentieth Part or upwards;
- "(5) Such Re-adjustment shall not take effect until the Termination of the then existing Parliament."

Again, in Sect. 52, it is enacted that "the number of members of the House of Commons may be from time to time increased by the Parliament of Canada, provided the proportionate representation of the Provinces prescribed by this Act is not thereby disturbed".

Later on, by the British North America Act of 1886 (49-50 Vict., c. 35), provision was made in Sect. 1 that "the Parliament of Canada may from time to time make provision for the representation in the Senate and House of Commons of Canada, or in either of them, of any territories which for the time being form part of the Dominion of Canada, but are not included in any province thereof".

Again in 1915, an amendment to the British North America Act (5-6 Geo. V, c. 45) was passed by the Imperial Parliament, providing that "notwithstanding anything in the said 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".

Readjustments in Representation.—As set out in the above-mentioned provisions of the British North America Act, the representation in the House of Commons has been readjusted after each of the seven decennial censuses and also following the admission of Manitoba, British Columbia and Prince Edward Island to Confederation and the creation of portions of the Northwest into Saskatchewan, Alberta and Yukon. At pp. 74-77 of the 1934-35 Year Book, the problems of redistribution are dealt with in detail, especially those arising out of the 1931 Census. Summarized accounts are also carried in later Year Books down to 1937 (see pp. 79 and 80 of the 1937 Year Book).

* The sessional indemnity of a member of the House of Commons is \$4,000.