

man of common sense: what reliance can be placed upon the argument which because there are so many post offices north of a certain line and so many south, that therefore these indicates the population in one as compared with the other. My right hon. friend can talk from now until doomsday about the number of post offices, but the more he talks the more he will show the weakness of his case. And as to the number of schools. Will the Prime Minister say that the number of schools north of the line and the number of schools south of the line is any indication of the population north or the population south? What are the practical facts? A district which can muster no more than ten children organizes itself into a school district and erects a school-house. Another district which is thickly populated, which has fifty children, organizes itself into a school district, and erects its school-house. According to my right hon. friend's argument, one school-house counts as much as another; but the population of the district represented by ten children would be thirty or forty, perhaps much less, while the population of the other district would be five or six times as much.

Now, what reliance can be placed on a mere recapitulation of school-houses as an index to the population north or south? It would have been an argument pertinent and confirmatory if my right hon. friend had given the school population north of the line and the school population south of the line, because in either case it would bear a fairly equal proportion to the adult population or the population of adults and children. In no other way is it worth a thought as an argument. Take again the improvement districts. My hon. friend from Calgary (Mr. M. S. McCarthy) yesterday showed very clearly the case from that point of view. In certain districts of the country, where the roads are poor, where the circumstances make it necessary that the people shall put their shoulders together and their pockets together in order to get fair roads for themselves, they are more apt to have improvement districts. But leaving aside the citation of particulars, how can you argue that because in the north there are so many improvement districts and in the south so many, therefore you have a basis from which you can deduce a greater or a less population for the one part than for the other? These are three of the considerations upon which you say you rest your distribution. The Minister of the Interior says he does not rest the division on these things. He is not driven by his assertion to argue an absurdity. The right hon. the First Minister is driven to argue an absurdity, and the absurdity is by making it appear that mere numbers of school-houses, numbers of post offices and numbers of improvement districts are any indication at all of the population. You can take anything

Mr. FOSTER.

else. My right hon. friend has cited the agricultural products. Does he think these are an index of the population? Does he think they are the same index of population in the Northwest that they are in the eastern provinces? In the eastern provinces, the grain-growing areas on the farms are restricted to a few acres comparatively, whereas in the Northwest one man may have a grain area of one square mile or two square miles or a half square mile, with all the concomitants of agricultural machinery, which takes the place of population and does the work of the naked hand. Does my right hon. friend want this House to think for a moment that there is any connection between the bare number of bushels of agricultural products raised in one section of the country and the number raised in another section as an index to the population that may be in each? The argument, if anything, is against him. But he says, when you come to the south, it is rich in cattle, and cattle require great areas. But the south is not confined to cattle entirely; my right hon. friend ought to know that. Gentlemen who come from the Northwest know that. Go down to the border, and you find large ranching interests, but you find other interests as well. Is it the one or the two kinds of products that you take as indicative of population, or is it the value of the whole mass taken together, and the value of the trade current in and out? That is the kind of figures my hon. friend gave. In that there is some force; but in the argument used by my right hon. friend, I put it to himself whether there is either logic or good sense. Let me press it home to him once more, so as if I can to make him understand what I am after. A school-house is standing in a certain place and a school-house is standing in another place. From the mere fact that a school-house is standing in each place, how can you deduce the population which supports the school-house in each place? Is it possible? Give the school population in the one case and the school population in the other, and any well instructed and informed man will give you a pretty close guess as to the total population in each. Let me go a little further. My right hon. friend talked learnedly and discursively about the three bases of this distribution. What was the first? The first he declared to be existing conditions. Does any one know what he meant by that? I followed him very closely to get at the conclusion he was going to deduce by saying that they had taken existing conditions into account. The only thing I could find was this. Under existing conditions you have fifteen local members in what is the present province of Alberta, and you must add ten more in order to make up twenty-five. I cannot see the argument in that. None of these fifteen representatives are for the new province. The moment the province is formed, these members disappear, and you will