

the elections were held two weeks after the elections in some of the others.

Mr. LAKE. Still that does not alter the fact that we had a very large district, as large no doubt as the new district which it is now proposed to divide into two. The Prime Minister has stated that the whole dispute over the distribution of seats in the province of Alberta was due to the rivalry between the cities of Edmonton and Calgary.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Mr. LAKE. Hon. members who endorse that statement, I presume, mean to convey their opinion that Edmonton is the proper place for the capital of the new province. More than that I take their endorsement to mean an endorsement of the attempt that is being made to force that opinion upon the people of the new province, who should be free to make the choice for themselves. But I may say that is not the reason which causes me to offer strong opposition to this distribution. The figures given by the Prime Minister himself are sufficient to convince me, and I think will be sufficient to convince any man who looks at this question from an independent point of view, that there is an unfair distribution of seats, even taking the votes cast as a basis, which I do not consider is a fair basis at all. But even taking that basis, which the Prime Minister considers the fairest, we find he is giving to the northern seats 10 per cent more representation than to the southern seats. And taking the basis of the names on the voters' list, he is giving to the northern portion of Alberta an advantage of 22 per cent over the seats in the southern portion, dividing the line near Red Deer.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. What if you take the population according to the census of 1901?

Mr. LAKE. If the hon. gentleman will pin his faith to the census of 1901 all through, well and good; let him apply it to Saskatchewan as well, and he will find where it will lead him.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. We will see about that at the proper time.

Mr. LAKE. Will the Prime Minister say now that he will make the distribution in Saskatchewan on the basis of the census of 1901?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I will take that along with the registered vote of 1901 and the school districts, all will be taken into consideration, as in the case of Alberta.

Mr. LAKE. That would mean giving the strongest weight to the points which are in his favour.

Mr. OLIVER. Perhaps the hon. gentleman would like to make a test of the mat-

Mr. LAMONT.

ter. Would he offer to distribute Alberta on the basis of the census?

Mr. LAKE. I do not accept the position for one moment that the census of 1901 is a fair basis for the distribution of seats at the present time.

Mr. OLIVER. Then don't ask that it shall be applied to Saskatchewan.

Mr. LAKE. I did not ask for it. I said that if the Prime Minister wished to take that as a basis in Alberta, he should be consistent and apply it to Saskatchewan. But I say it is an absolutely unfair basis, and you might as well distribute the seats for the Yukon elections on the basis of the population of 1894.

Mr. OLIVER. Because the hon. gentleman thinks this is unfair he refuses to take it in the old part of Alberta and accepts it unreservedly in the new part of Athabaska.

Mr. LAKE. I did not accept it unreservedly in any case. I have not stated that I have accepted it unreservedly in Athabaska. In the speeches that I have made on this subject I have never made an estimate of the population of Athabaska except to state my belief that the votes cast in these two districts will be less than the votes which were cast in the district of Kinistino in the last territorial election. The right hon. Prime Minister has stated that it is almost impossible to distribute the population between these different seats within a 10 per cent margin. I cannot see that impossibility at all. I think there is no difficulty in the matter. At any rate I say it is unfair to have the balance always on one side. If there is any difficulty in distributing the population within 10 or 20 per cent we ought to see that general average is evened up. There may be constituencies in the south that are higher than the average and constituencies in the south that are lower than the average. Then, there may be constituencies in the north which will work out in the same way, some higher and some lower. Let there be give and take on both sides so as to make a distribution as between north and south that is fairer than this distribution. Do not give the advantage all to one side. I consider that the only fair basis at which we can arrive. Do not give the advantage to the north of a representation 22 per cent over the representation which you are giving to the south, and in addition to giving to the north an advantage of 22 per cent add two seats in the district of Athabaska which, in my opinion, can be very well added to existing districts in the northern part of Alberta.

Mr. OLIVER. Does the hon. gentleman complain that the rural districts in the northern part of Alberta are smaller in population than those in the south?