

1901, for giving that unorganized territory even one representative.

Now, if we depart from the census of 1901 what have we? We have two guides which have been invoked in this committee—one is the number of votes polled at the general election of November last, and the other the number of votes upon the lists prepared for that general election. For reasons which I stated in this committee, yesterday, and which I need not repeat now, it is obvious, I should suppose, to every hon. gentleman in this House that the list of electors, and not the number of votes, cast is the better guide as to the actual population. I should not think there could be any argument on the other side. So many considerations affect the proportion of votes cast, out of the total number of votes upon the list, that it seems idle for any man to be put to the trouble of arguing that the list of voters is a better guide to population than the number of votes actually polled. But even this guide of the number of names on the list falls us so far as the unorganized district is concerned, for the reason that those who are supposed to live in this unorganized territory did not vote at the general election—no lists were made up and no polls were held. This is as I understand it. Now, what evidence or information have we before this committee which will be as reasonably sufficient for the unorganized portion of the territory, as the list of voters made up in November last is for the organized part? I stated yesterday, and I repeat it to-day, that we have no information sufficient for that purpose. Therefore, I argued yesterday, and I do not to-day depart in the slightest from the stand I then took, that it would be a proper thing, a reasonable and fair thing, for the government to leave the estimating of that population and the fixing of the representation to be accorded to the new territory to some tribunal which should have the power and duty of investigating that question and coming to a conclusion upon proper information. But let us go a step further and see what is the highest estimate which has been made by the Prime Minister or his Minister of the Interior as to the population of this unorganized territory. I asked that yesterday: I asked first, what was the estimate of the population of this unorganized territory to which one-twelfth of the whole representation of the province is to be given, and, second, upon what evidence which could be considered as such by this House is that estimate made. The highest estimate that I have heard was that made by the Minister of the Interior (Mr. Oliver), who said that it was believed that in this unorganized territory there is a population of about 5,000 souls. I do not believe that there is any information before the House, or in the possession of the Minister of the Interior, to justify us in accepting that conclusion. For my part, I do

not accept it,—not casting any reflection upon the hon. gentleman, but simply for the reason that I do not think he has information that should reasonably lead him to that conclusion. But even if we accept that conclusion, where do we find ourselves? Where does the right hon. Prime Minister (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) find himself? He proposes, in a population of 250,000 souls, to establish a legislature of 25 members. And he proposes to allot two of these members to a portion of territory hitherto unrepresented which at the very highest estimate, contains only 5,000 people. Does he realize what he does in this matter? Can he for one moment suggest that there is anything fair, or reasonable, or even decent, in proceeding on that basis? Two hundred and fifty thousand people are supposed to be in this territory on July 1st next. According to the very highest estimate given by any hon. gentleman on the other side, only 5,000 will be in the unorganized territory. And to these 5,000 one-fiftieth of the whole, he proposes to give one-twelfth of the whole representation of the province. And for what reason, pray? Is it on account of expected further development? Will the Prime Minister, the Minister of the Interior or any other hon. member for one moment say, that there is likely to be greater development in that unorganized territory, within the next three or four years, for which this delimitation will stand, than in the vicinity of Edmonton or Calgary, or in any of the organized districts of the province? It is idle to speculate about that. But if speculation must be indulged in, I, for one, believe that the development, the increase of population will proceed at a much more rapid rate in the organized portions of the territory in those portions that are easily accessible to railways, than in any portion that cannot have these advantages. Perhaps that has not struck my right hon. friend (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) in the way I put it. But when he realizes that 5,000 souls is the utmost claim—a claim made on absolutely insufficient and unsatisfactory evidence—as to the population of this unorganized territory, and when he realizes that the entire population of the province is supposed to be 250,000 people, can he with any pretense of justice, with any claim of right and fairness, give to the 245,000 people in the organized territories twenty three members and to the 5,000 people in the unorganized territory two members in the legislature?

It seems to me that any such suggestion will be recognized to the full by the right hon. gentleman as one to which he cannot commit himself, as one which his sense of justice will not accept, as one which he will be inclined to modify, and I venture to think that this suggestion which we have made is one which the right hon. gentleman ought to accept. My hon. friend from St. Antoine