

mate of 6,500 population for the district of Athabaska; when we consider the peculiar circumstance of that territory attached to the rest of the province;—when we take all the things into consideration I am satisfied that the House and the country will justify the proportion of representation that is proposed to be accorded to that territory, and will say that anything less than that would be a rank injustice not only to the people of the district of Athabaska—that would be the smallest part of the consideration—but would be very much against the wellbeing of the whole new province and against the wellbeing of the Dominion of Canada.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. What does the hon. minister estimate the population of the whole province of Alberta on the 1st July next?

Mr. OLIVER. The estimate that has been given is 250,000.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. In what way will it affect the wellbeing of the people of Alberta to give only one member to 5,000 people, when the average for the whole province is one member for 10,000 people?

Mr. OLIVER. I am sorry, I thought I had made myself clear. I said and I say again that the development and improvement and the granting to the new district of Athabaska, in its different parts, the advantages of civilization under provincial government, is a matter of the very greatest importance to the whole of the province of Alberta, and that the geographical conditions being as they are it is an absolute physical impossibility for one representative to represent the divergent interests of the two sections of that great country while it is to the interest of every part of the province of Alberta and of this whole Dominion of Canada to have both sections adequately represented in the new legislature.

Mr. FOSTER. What are the diverse interests?

Mr. OLIVER. The diverse interests are the interests which lie along the Athabaska river and along the Peace river, the Peace River being an agricultural country looking to agricultural development, the Athabaska, being a fur-bearing country and looking to development in the matter of timber and minerals. Surely there could not be a greater diversity of interests than between these two rivers, and their distance apart and their general geographical conditions are such that no one representative could do justice to them.

Our friends have read returns, receipts of railways and of post offices, and the increase in business in the southern part of the country. Where does that increased business come from? What has swollen the receipts of the railways at Calgary? Is it because there are 12,000 people in Calgary as against 5,000 a few years ago? Nobody will contend that. Is it because there

are 10,000 people there instead of 5,000, that there are greater customs returns or that there are more letters received or that there is a large increase in the number of wholesale houses. Everybody knows that the increase of business in a centre of trade such as Calgary or Edmonton is not because of an increased population in those places, but because of an increase of population in the far-outlying places. It is due to the increase in the district of Athabaska, as much as to any other cause that the cities of Edmonton and Calgary are growing as they are growing and that the receipts of the railroads are swelling as they are swelling. There is no other conclusion to be reached and I say that in this day and generation, in this country of Canada, where so much depends upon the development of a new country and where without any serious increase of population we have had our trade and revenues doubled within a few years by reason of the development of new country, and not by increase of population, I cannot understand how the position can be taken that it is not in every one's interest to see that those who are developing the new country shall have every opportunity to do so to advantage.

Mr. FOSTER. Do I understand the minister to say that Calgary has progressed and grown mainly because of development that has taken place in the outlying district of Athabaska?

Mr. OLIVER. I did not say mainly. I said partly.

Mr. FOSTER. But what is the proportion? Will the hon. gentleman come down a little from his airy generalizations to particulars? Will he give us particulars of the trade that flows into Calgary from all portions of the country around Calgary and what proportion of trade it is that flows in from the Peace River and the Athabaska, by figures or anything else?

Mr. OLIVER. I want to be civil in conducting this discussion, but I certainly find it very difficult when I am asked questions that are—

Mr. FOSTER. Difficult to answer.

Mr. OLIVER—absurd on the face of them, which I am not expected to answer, which the member in asking knew I could not by any possibility answer.

Mr. FOSTER. I must say I had a glimmering suspicion that he could not answer them, but the pertinence of my inquiry was that if the hon. gentleman formed a general conclusion upon such a thing and gave it to the House, I supposed he had some data on which to form that conclusion. The statement he made here was that Calgary and Edmonton, take Calgary for instance, had largely progressed and grown rich, not because the population was larger in Calgary, but because of the development in