

constituencies in the Northwest is a sufficient answer; there is no comparison. In the one case there is a centralized population, in the other case there is a rural population, and the rule does not depend upon the size of the place but upon the peculiar circumstances and upon the proportion of the total vote of the constituencies. The rule has always been applied throughout the provinces of the Dominion, and it is being applied in the Northwest now, and it would be improper if it were not so applied. As to the district of Athabaska, as to the votes in that district, as to the rights of pioneers to be over-represented if they are over-represented; every man in an outlying locality in a new country counts not only for his individual self as does a man in a large city, but that pioneer is the centre of attraction, to trade and population and civilization and development, and it is upon the word of that man that the tendency of trade and population and civilization depends. If we are to have development in that district of Athabaska; if we are to have roads built and the conveniences of civilization so that there may be greater development, upon whose word are we to depend but upon the word of the men scattered here and there over that territory. Is it going to be said that the men in these districts who are the pioneers of development, progress and advancement, are not to be represented because there are not so many of them as there are in other constituencies?

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. According to the premises of which you are proceeding, there are very few of these pioneers; there were 5,000 of them, but only about 342 voters were there in 1901.

Mr. OLIVER. We will admit there are very few.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Very few pioneers.

Mr. OLIVER. I do not exactly catch the point, but I should say that in a territory as large as Athabaska, if there are 5,000 people scattered all over that territory they are all pioneers.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Then every one in the Northwest is a pioneer?

Mr. OLIVER. I do not think the residents of the cities of Edmonton or Calgary for instance could properly claim to be pioneers at the present day. Where people are living in the midst of all the advantages of civilization as are the people of the urban cities in the Northwest, with all due deference to the people of Regina, Prince Albert, Edmonton, Calgary or Moosejaw, I do not think that taking man for man, each individual in each of these cities is of as great value to the state, or that his advice towards the development of the country is as valuable as that of the man who by reason

of his distant location is the centre of attraction for settlement and development. He is the point from which must necessarily radiate the information that is necessary to the well-being and advancement of the country. A pioneer, on every ground, is entitled to greater representation in the legislature than is a man of any other class, if we are looking to the development of our country, as I hope we all are.

My hon. friend from St. Antoine made the suggestion that if a part of the district of Athabaska as large as the district of St. Albert was set apart, that would cover practically all the population of the district of Athabaska. In the first place, that idea has no bearing on the question. The population of the electoral division of St. Albert is largely contained in one part of that electoral division; but the population of the district of Athabaska is not contained in one particular part of it, but is scattered along the two great rivers. There are no conditions in the district of St. Albert parallel in any degree to those in the district of Athabaska. Therefore when my hon. friend asks us to make a similar district in Athabaska, he simply ignores all the facts and conditions which are essential to making a satisfactory distribution.

Mr. LALOR. In the minister's estimate of 5,000 inhabitants in Athabaska, what proportions are Indians, half-breeds and whites?

Mr. OLIVER. The Indian population of the district of Athabaska, according to the treaty—and I am credibly informed that it has not increased to any great degree since—was 735.

Mr. LALOR. When was that treaty made?

Mr. OLIVER. In 1899 or 1900. In the district of Peace River the Indian population was 955. So that there are about 1,700 Indians in the two districts.

Mr. LALOR. Have you an estimate of the other portions of the population at the same time?

Mr. OLIVER. No. I get the other portions of the population from the census of 1901.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. The hon. gentleman's estimate of the Indian population is the same as we have obtained from the census in 1901?

Mr. OLIVER. Yes. The Indian population remains at about what it was; that of the half-breeds has increased. My estimate of the total population in Athabaska is 5,000 whites and half-breeds, exclusive of Indians.

Mr. FOSTER. On what basis do you make that estimate?

Mr. OLIVER. On information given to me by gentlemen from that country who are well informed in regard to it.