

pose it were a little difficult for a man who wants to be a representative, within a certain space of time, to visit these settlements in Peace River and Athabaska. Suppose that we annexed it to some constituency further south, even if it were a little difficult to carry on the election, there are resources in the legislation of this country to meet the case; it is possible to accommodate the machinery of elections to that kind of circumstances. It is done to-day in our present election law, and in our constitution. It could be done there in just the same way. More time can be given and special machinery can be put into operation in order to give these more distant settlements the right to exercise their franchise and poll their votes. It is not necessary, and it is not fair to go to the opposite extreme and to argue that because there are two or three posts 300 or 400 miles distant from the nearest constituency that therefore you are to give unequal representation. No one would grumble at unequal representation to a certain extent.

But will the government give unequal representation to an unreasonable and absurd extent merely to sustain the argument that every Canadian, every British subject, who has the franchise should have equal right in the exercise of the franchise? No, it is done because it makes uneven the due balance between north and south; it is done in order that two men may be placed in the new parliament to exercise authority in moulding its initiatory legislation in order that party advantage may be gained. In other words, there is no doubt, I believe, that this is simply a gerrymander. This is an attempt on the part of hon. gentlemen opposite to control the legislature of Alberta in their own interest. There are reasons why they wish to do this. The very campaign we have been going through here for the last five months furnishes the reason—the necessity hon. gentlemen opposite feel of having a majority in the legislature to throw the mantle of their approval over everything that is done by this government. Now, is it well to proceed to the formation of a new province on such lines as these? Is it well for even a powerful government to afford ground for suspicion of such a thing? Commence with a gerrymander, and with what measure ye meet it shall be measured to you again. A gerrymander perpetrated by the father and founder of the province will be measured back again—but without profit to the new province. The feeling caused by such an act rests deep in the hearts of the people and is not easily overcome. Does my right hon. friend (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) read the newspapers from the Northwest? Will he collate the utterances of the Liberal newspapers from the province of Alberta and try to understand what that voice is telling him? Is it not reasonable to suppose that these newspapers have the interest of their country at heart? Is it not reasonable to suppose that they represent as good Liberal doctrine

Mr. FOSTER.

as does the Minister of the Interior (Mr. Oliver)? Is it out of malice, out of mere cussedness that they are giving utterance to the sentiments that they express? Or is it because they have a feeling that they must express? They afford my hon. friend food for reflection. The course he is pursuing must inevitably implant in that new province, at the beginning of his political life, a suspicion, a sense of injustice, a desire of revenge—feelings that do not help in maintaining the peace, order and good government of that country. Why should the government incur suspicion? Is there not a better way? More than that, the government's supporter from Strathcona (Mr. Peter Talbot) may be a fair and sensible gentleman; the Minister of the Interior (Mr. Oliver) may be the same; they are credited with being the master hands in drawing up this schedule. I have been given to understand that, if the Minister of the Interior had not been unreasonable in pushing this proposal, some better way would have been resorted to. Is it, or is it not a fact consonant with common sense that you might go to a non-partisan body in the Northwest? I am not making any imputation against the hon gentlemen I have named. But they are partisans. The Minister of the Interior (Mr. Oliver) could not live if he were not a partisan; he could not be Minister of the Interior if he were not a partisan. And his friend beside him (Mr. Peter Talbot) could not get the good things that are going, and could not support what the Minister of the Interior wants him to support, unless he were a strong partisan—and sometimes, I dare say, he feels that he must be mighty strong to support it all. The plain common sense of it is,—here are two partisans with an interest in the complexion of this representation, a money interest, a party interest, a political interest, to go no further. Are these gentlemen presumably able to prepare for this parliament a fair and reasonable distribution of these seats, or is there some other body that could do it better? It seems to me that the better course has been suggested by my hon. friend from Calgary (Mr. M. S. McCarthy). What objection can there be to having these men who have been appointed to the highest judicial position in the gift of the government in that country do this work? They are men of trained legal minds, men who have been elevated to the bench and so live outside the atmosphere of partisanship, in a place, where, as it is popularly supposed, these old scales fall from their eyes and they can see the facts as they are and act judicially. Certainly, they are free from the trammels of politics and have nothing much more to hope for in political advantage. And they have their reputations at stake. More than that, they live in all the constituencies; they travel through them all. The principle is declared here that these constituencies should be formed with a due regard to population. Who are the men who can most