

Calgary (Mr. M. S. McCarthy) with great attention yesterday. He made a very earnest speech from his point of view, but, when we have simmered the underlying thought of the speech of more than two hours which he made yesterday—and if I say two hours it is not by way of reproach; he had a task to perform on behalf of his constituents, and I do not blame him, quite the contrary—but the underlying thought which you find in every line, every word and every syllable of that speech is that this objection is taken to the distribution which we have placed upon the table of the House from one point of view only; not because the constituencies are unfair towards each other, not because there is an unfair advantage given to one over the other, but simply because there is not in the south the number of seats which ought to go to the south. That is my hon. friend's point.

Mr. M. S. McCarthy. Hear, hear.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I see I have properly interpreted it. My hon. friend has taken the division of Red Deer, township 38, as the point of division between the north and south. There are 23 divisions in old Alberta according to our new plan of distribution. Eleven are north of Red Deer, and 11 are south of Red Deer, and the point my hon. friend has made was that there should be 15 south of Red Deer and 10 north of Red Deer, that is including Red Deer. Let us see whether there is anything to justify that or not. First of all I am very, very sorry that in a matter of this kind it should be reduced simply to a point of argument whether or not the seats should be put in the north or the south. For my own part I discard all that; I do not consider whether they are to be in the north or the south; they are to be placed wherever the population warrants it. That is the only argument, I think.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. Is that accepted? I am more than delighted to hear it is accepted, and if it is there should be no more discussion.

Mr. LAKE. I understand the minister to mean that there should be a fair distribution of population between the different seats?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. That is what I mean.

Mr. LAKE. How much margin would the Prime Minister allow? There must be always a certain margin, would he say 5 per cent or 10 per cent.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I do not know what my hon. friend means by 10 per cent. I am willing that he should take all the comfort he can out of the figures I am going to place before him. He wants the division between the north and the south—apparently a sort of Mason and Dixon's line, in the Northwest.

Mr. M. S. McCarthy. The Minister of the Interior (Mr. Oliver) was the first to suggest the north and south division by proposing township 38 as the dividing line.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I believe it was neither the Minister of the Interior (Mr. Oliver) nor my hon. friend from Calgary (Mr. M. S. McCarthy) who first suggested that division. It was suggested, if I may say so, from other quarters. Some time ago, when the question of the selection of the capital was brought to my attention, I was asked to take Red Deer, as a point midway between north and south. This is an idea that is running in the minds of my hon. friend and others. He is but re-echoing that which is in other minds. But, for my part, I am sorry that any matter of so great moment should be looked at in so narrow a way. Again I repeat, the divisions should be as warranted by population.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. Very good. Now, let us look at the figures. Take first the number of votes recorded in the eleven constituencies south of Red Deer and in the other constituencies north of Red Deer. On this point there is no serious discrepancy in the figures as given to me.

Mr. INGRAM. How about Athabaska and Peace River? How do they come in?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I will come to that—I am speaking now of the old constituencies. The eleven constituencies south of Red Deer are: Cardston, Lethbridge, Macleod, Pincher, Gleichen, Calgary, Rosebud, High River, Banff, Innisfail and Medicine Hat. The number of votes recorded in these constituencies in the last Dominion election numbered 10,566, or an average of about 960 votes to each electoral division. The eleven constituencies north of Red Deer are the following: Vermilion, Lacombe, Ponoka, Wetaskiwin, Leduc, Strathcona, Stony Plain, and Edmonton. In these constituencies the number of votes recorded was 9,553. This is almost 1,000 less than in the other group and makes an average of about 867 votes for each constituency, or almost 100 less. So, I give that at once to my hon. friend (Mr. Lake). Now, when we take the number of registered votes we find in the eleven divisions south of Red Deer there were 15,895 registered votes, an average of 1,444 for each constituency. In the constituency north of Red Deer, the number of votes registered was 12,863, or an average of 11,696. The total population of the eleven constituencies south of Red Deer, according to the census of 1901 was 31,034, an average of 2,821 for each constituency. The eleven constituencies north of Red Deer had a population of 36,398, an average of 3,308—in that respect a decided advantage to the north. So, it will be seen that, while on the votes polled, the advantage is, as I have stated, in favour of the south, when