

pointed out that the same principle applied to both, and that in case of one it resulted in absurdity. The right hon. gentleman said he would take that up later. Apparently he has forgotten it.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I did not intend to discuss Saskatchewan to-day.

Mr. FOSTER. But it certainly is pertinent to the present question. The right hon. gentleman has stated a basis upon which, as he contends, a fair distribution can be made. That basis, presumably, applies to both provinces;—certainly a basis of general principle cannot be wrong for Saskatchewan and right for Alberta. But, when the principle is worked out in the case of Saskatchewan, it produces the most enormous disparity, as shown by my hon. friend from Qu'Appelle (Mr. Lake). To that hon. gentleman's statements there has been no answer. I think there ought to be an answer.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I do not see that that answer should be given to-day. If there are discrepancies so great as to be absurd, in the case of Saskatchewan, when we come to the case of Saskatchewan, we will discuss them. And, if there are things to be rectified they must be rectified.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. But, are we not entitled to know from the right hon. gentleman (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) why the unit of representation is so greatly departed from? Whether we deal with the number of votes cast or the number of names on the list there are remarkable discrepancies. For instance, at Rosebud, there are 749 votes cast and 1,189 on the list. At High River, there were 971 votes cast and 1,528 on the list. Why does the right hon. gentleman make some constituencies so much below the unit of population and others so much above it? We go upon the basis of population. As there are no municipal divisions, you are at liberty to make the ridings approximately the same, one would think. I have not heard or read anything in this debate which would indicate a reason for these disparities.

Mr. TURRIF. The list of voters does not in every case represent the population now in the district.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Then, it is not a safe guide?

Mr. TURRIF. Not absolutely.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Then, is not that a reason to refer the matter to investigation?

Mr. TURRIF. This affects the north more than it does the south.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I do not care about north and south.

Mr. TURRIF. It was pointed out that at Stony Plain there were some 700 on the list, while at High River there were 1,700. That might very easily be and yet there might be no great disparity in population,

for the reason that in the northern part of the district a far larger proportion of foreign-born immigration is going in than in the southern portion. In the southern portion of Alberta the population is practically all English speaking, and in the northern portion there are a great many foreign born, who cannot become naturalized until they have been in the country three years. So that there are many districts where there may be thousands of people, who were not there when the census was taken in 1901 and who have not yet the right to vote. So that many districts, which have a small number of votes on the lists, may have a very large population and are entitled to the representation they are getting.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I might say, in answer to my hon. friend, who asked why do you make certain divisions of a lesser population than others. This is altogether dependent upon geographical conditions. It is impossible, in a matter of this kind, to come even within 10 per cent of giving the same number of voters in each riding.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I would imagine that the geographical conditions in this province would offer less difficulty than in Ontario or any other of the eastern provinces, as it is nearly all prairie. Let us take the districts where there are no geographical difficulties or will my right hon. friend say that geographical difficulties have prevailed in every case?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. No.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I assume that in dealing with the conditions, you deal with them as you did with the provinces in 1903. You think that you have some evidence as to what the population is, although my hon. friend (Mr. Turriff) seems to think that these figures are not a sufficient guide, and in that I agree with him. But assuming, for the purpose of argument, that they are, you must, I suppose adopt a unit of population. When we redistributed for the Dominion we adopted a unit, I think, of about 25,000. When you are fixing the divisions of the province of Alberta, you likewise adopt a unit of population, if you are proceeding on the basis of population, as I understand you are. What is the unit of population which the right hon. gentleman has adopted and why is it you depart so largely from it?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. The unit of population we have tried to get from some five or six different sources, but unfortunately we can only get an approximate figure. If we were dealing with any of the eastern provinces, we could take the census of 1901, and no one would seriously object to that. But we know that in the Northwest the conditions are not at all to-day what they were then, and we have had to take recourse to other sources of information, such as the