

Mr. PETER TALBOT. Right from the beginning. I do not know when they started the Battleford land office, but there were four times 1,243 entries in all. I may say that quite recently, there have been about 7,000 entries in that office and a good many are in this particular part, our side of the fourth meridian.

Mr. AMES. The hon. gentleman cannot say how many of the 1,243 were made in the last two years?

Mr. PETER TALBOT. I think most of them, for we know that in that particular locality there were no settlers until the Barr colony went out there, and now we know, that every available quarter section, for many miles around Lloydminster, is homesteaded.

I made a little different calculation on the post offices to that which was furnished by the Post Office Department to the Minister of the Interior. I shall give my calculation, and I think you will agree with me that I acted very fairly. I found that in the constituency of Alberta there were forty-six post offices; in Medicine Hat district, which is to be added to Alberta, there were ten; in Calgary, fifty-four; in Edmonton district, sixty, and in Strathcona, ninety-five. A portion of the Strathcona constituency runs south of township 38. I made a careful calculation of the votes polled north and south of Red Deer in my constituency, and I concluded that one-fifth of my constituency was south of the river. Going on that conclusion, the part of Strathcona constituency south of Red Deer would have nineteen post offices. That would leave south of Red Deer 129 post offices and north of Red Deer 136 post offices. Although I am well aware that post offices are not a sure indication of population, I submit that in a farming country they do indicate whether that country is fairly thickly settled or not. If we find in a certain district ten post offices and in another of the same size only four, we would naturally conclude that there was a much larger population in the former than the latter.

I also claim that the local improvement districts that were organized north and south of Red Deer are an indication of population, although not one that can be entirely relied upon. The people are not compelled to form local improvement districts, but if they do form these local improvement districts, they spend their own taxes in their own way. If they do not form these local improvement districts they pay their taxes to the government at Regina, and their money is expended for them. But we know that the great majority of the people want to see how their taxes are going to be spent, and the result is that they have formed these local improvement districts wherever there is sufficient population in the different localities. I may mention that these local im-

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provement districts are of a uniform size—12 square miles. We have north of Red Deer river 62 of these local improvement districts, while south of Red Deer district there are 42. Now, some hon. gentlemen argue that the presence of schools and school districts is no indication of population.

Mr. M. S. McCARTHY. Before the hon. gentleman passes from the Battleford homestead entries, I would like to say that I have here a map published by the Department of the Interior on 1st January, 1905, showing the townships which are ready for settlement. I will pass this map over to my hon. friend, and he will see that there are very few of such townships which are included in Battleford west of the 4th meridian. I merely mention that fact because the hon. gentleman has added one-fourth of the homestead entries of Battleford to his calculation of homestead entries. I do not think he would make the statement if he would look at the map.

Mr. PETER TALBOT. I do not know anything about that map. These are the figures I got from my hon. friend the Minister of the Interior, and I know from driving through that locality and having spent several days there that the country is settled.

Mr. M. S. McCARTHY. Could not the hon. Minister of the Interior place before the House the actual homestead entries?

Mr. PETER TALBOT. I dare say he could get them. I am sure that the Minister of the Interior has given the total as four times 1,243. I think you will find that is right. I may be mistaken in saying there are a fourth of them west of the 4th meridian, although I believe there are. On this question of schools, I maintain that if there is anything outside of an actual census that would tell the population of a district or a country, it would be the number of schools in it. People do not form schools until they have to. They do not organize schools and pay taxes for fun. They are compelled, by our laws up there, when the child population of the locality reaches a certain number, to organize schools, and school districts are of a uniform size. I find that in Edmonton constituency there are 92 schools, in the part of Strathcona north of township 38 there are 234 schools, making a total north of Red Deer of 326. South of Red Deer we have in Alberta constituency 74 schools, in Calgary district 116 schools, in part of Strathcona south of Red Deer 58 schools and in Medicine Hat district 20 schools, making a total of 268—326 schools north of Red Deer and 268 south of Red Deer. I believe I am correct in saying that that corresponds with the number of teachers for each room is called a school in the report of our Commissioner of Education. Some one sought to convey the idea that a lot of these schools might be vacant. I want to con-