

lature, so that all matters affecting the country could be ventilated, and so that the peculiar wants and requirements of the community could be made known. To my mind these things apply equally well at the present day as in former times. The concession has been made by the opposition during this discussion that Athabaska should get at least one member. When the debate commenced four days ago, gentlemen opposite contended that Athabaska should not have a representative, but that the boundaries of St. Albert and Sturgeon should be extended north to the limits of Athabaska and Mackenzie, and that Athabaska should be included in these constituencies. That was the first proposition made by gentlemen on the other side. They have evidently now come to the conclusion that this would not be fair to the people now in Athabaska as well as to people who are going into that Territory, and who have their own interests and their own requirements, and whose voice should be heard in the legislature of the province. The point now is whether Athabaska should have one member or two. If we look at the population alone I grant that one member ought to be enough, but if you look at the peculiarities of the geographical conditions, I leave it to the leader of the opposition himself and to his friends behind him to say whether or not it is fair that you should have only a single representative for that immense territory in which there are at present no lines of communication, in which the settlements are centred upon the Peace and the Athabaska rivers, and between which two rivers so far as I know there is no direct communication. Under such circumstances I ask if it would be reasonable to give only one representative to the district of Athabaska. I do not pronounce categorically on the question; I am willing to listen to argument, but again I repeat that unless I am greatly mistaken no one would begrudge two members to the district of Athabaska, but for the fact that the capital has to be selected and the gentlemen from Calgary seem to think that if Athabaska is given two representatives instead of one, Calgary has no chance of being the capital. My hon. friend (Mr. R. L. Borden) suggests now that we should adopt another method of division and take as a basis the four federal electoral districts of Calgary, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Strathcona, giving six members to one, and three members to another, and five members to another. Why not give six members to the other instead of five. I do not know how that would work out. If you gave six members to these districts, you might also have to give six to the others; but it seems to me that the best thing to do is not to do that in advance, but to take up the constituencies as they are on the map, one after another, and see whether they are fair or not, and, if they are not fair, to try to rectify them.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Might I be permitted to say in reply to the right hon. gentleman that the question of the capital does not affect in any way the conclusions which I have been endeavouring to express to the House. The right hon. gentleman says that if there were no question of the capital concerned, no one in this House would begrudge two members to the unorganized territory which is to form part of the new province of Alberta. I do not like the word 'begrudge,' I am not begrudging anything; I am proposing to allot to every man in the province of Alberta, so far as we can reasonably do it, the same voice in the legislature that every other man has. My right hon. friend talks of a concession having been made. I thought I had made myself reasonably clear. I stated over and over again that I did not think there was any evidence before this committee that would justify the conclusion that there are 5,000 people in that unorganized territory. I am of that opinion still. But we have got past that, not as a matter of fact, but for the purpose of this argument. I am taking the estimates made by the members of the administration themselves, and I am pointing out that 245,000 people are to have a representation of 23, and 5,000 people are to have a representation of 2. Can we concede for a moment that there are conditions which would justify that? I know of no such conditions. If there are any let us know what they are. I have not heard from my right hon. friend what they are. He says that one representative is not enough because the people are scattered. Well, I have not observed any provision in this Bill that the members of these particular ridings are to be residents of the ridings they represent, or any provision to enable their constituents to see them. It is very probable that men who have business interests in these ridings will represent them, although residing at Edmonton. What advantage or necessity is there in having two representatives instead of one? Suppose you extended the constituency further towards the north pole, and had a population of 5,000 or 6,000 scattered over a thousand miles of that territory, would you give them three or four or five members because the territory would be so much larger? I have never heard of such an argument before. My right hon. friend refers to the illustrations given by the hon. Minister of the Interior, and talks about Quebec West and Yale-Cariboo. We are not discussing Quebec West or Yale-Cariboo. I assume that there were conditions that made it necessary for these constituencies to have the representation given to them; otherwise it was the hon. gentleman's duty in 1903 to remedy any grievance. Why did not the right hon. gentleman refer to Old Sarum with a dozen electors which elected one member when Liverpool with 100,000 people