

anities. I assume that had they been improper or unreasonable, the leader of the opposition (Mr. R. L. Borden) and hon. gentlemen behind him would have tried to do away with them. But, as these hon. gentlemen and all of us know, there are circumstances and conditions which govern in the distribution of seats besides the mere consideration of population. It is necessary that the people with common interests shall be grouped together. And this principle which prevented the absolute recognition of the equality of representation prevails in the province of Alberta as it does elsewhere. And why should it not? And, if in all other parts of the Dominion, we regard local conditions and circumstances and do not regard only the equality of population, why should we not do the same for Alberta? Although these schedules and maps have been before the people of Alberta for a month or more there has not been a complaint from any section against this distribution on the ground that one constituency was larger than another. The only complaint that has been voiced in this House or anywhere else is the complaint as between the south and the north, and not as between constituency and constituency. And when these hon. gentlemen presume to argue that injustice is proved because one constituency has 600 votes and the other has 1,000 votes they know they are not dealing fairly by the House and the country. The evidence is in the census; the evidence is within the knowledge of every man of them.

With regard to the fairness of treatment accorded members of the opposition in this matter, may I be allowed to show where the suggestion of my hon. friend the leader of the opposition and his colleague from North Toronto (Mr. Foster) leads them. Their suggestion gives ample proof of the purpose and reason which is the foundation of all their complaints. Their first charge was that there was no attempt to have a conference; and when that had to go by the board, then they say: Oh, we do not mean that kind of a conference. My hon. friend the leader of the opposition complained because the leader of the government had not approached him with a definite proposal for a discussion by a joint committee from both sides of the House—in regard to what? The distribution of constituencies for this House? No; the distribution of constituencies in a province about to be created. It seems to me that that is a question of a territorial or provincial nature rather than of a Dominion nature, and that while, in the nature of things, this parliament has to give its final decision in that matter, it was a subject chiefly for consideration with the present existing government of the Territories, with whom this government was carrying on its negotiations. And in pursuance of that idea and of the suggestion of the premier of the Dominion to the premier of the Territories, a conference

was proposed to be held between the government of the Territories, as it was represented here in Ottawa at that time, and the members of this parliament representing the Territories. Such a conference would be in the nature of dealing with a provincial or local question, which was not a question of party politics or should not have been. And when my hon. friend the leader of the opposition and his colleague from North Toronto (Mr. Foster) complain that the First Minister did not approach them with a request for a joint committee between the two political parties in this House, they thereby demand that this question of the distribution of seats in the new province of Alberta shall be dealt with as a question of party politics and not of provincial interests.

Mr. AMES. If this be purely a local question, I understand that there are fifteen representatives in the local House who come from the present province of Alberta.

Mr. OLIVER. Yes.

Mr. AMES. Have they been consulted in any way in this connection?

Mr. OLIVER. I regret to say they have not.

Mr. AMES. Then it is a purely local question in which the fifteen representatives who will have—probably the most of them—to come up for re-election, should have been consulted.

Mr. OLIVER. I did not say it was purely a local question. I said it was chiefly a local question. It is not purely a local question, because this House has to give a final word with regard to it. But it is purely a local question to that extent, and on that point the hon. member and myself differ. But when he says that the members of the Territorial legislature might very well have been asked, in their official capacity, regarding this redistribution, I quite agree with him. But it was not for the First Minister of the Dominion to call together the Territorial legislature for the purpose of discussion. That was the duty of the premier of the Territories. He did not choose to do it, and therefore he must be held responsible if the people of the Territories have not been consulted in the matter.

Mr. AMES. Would the hon. minister tell us what encouragement the premier of the Territories had to make any overtures of this character?

Mr. OLIVER. The premier of the Territories was not required to make overtures. It was not in the nature of an overture, but a matter of duty on his part. If he thought an injustice was being done, if he thought inequality was being meted out to the different parts of the country under his control, it was his duty as premier to have the opinion of the Territories heard in that matter. And when he did not take that stand,