

districts in the north were joined to some of the existing districts, these constituencies would be so large that it would be physically impossible for any man to cover them, no matter what effort he applied to the task. Under such circumstances, it was necessary to form one or two districts in which the population is below the unit of representation, but which are far above the average in regard to territory. This applies chiefly to the district of Athabaska. All the other districts are, I believe, fairly well covered by the unit of representation. These are the salient principles which have actuated us—first of all, the existing condition of things. The present constituencies are the basis we have endeavoured to take. Some of them have been reproduced absolutely; others have been cut in two; others have been differently arranged.

Mr. FOSTER. Will my right hon. friend inform me how many have been kept absolutely as they are now?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I do not know that I can at this moment. This information will come more regularly from those who are more familiar than I am with the country. That was the first consideration, at all events—the existing representation. The next was the population to be represented, and the next was the geographical distribution of the population. These are the three principles which we have had in mind, and I do not think it is possible to have any other guides.

Mr. FOSTER. What population was taken for each of these provinces, and what was the unit? Was it made by dividing twenty-five into the population?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. Yes. My hon. friend who follows me will give all this information.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. The right hon. gentleman has not told us what political considerations influenced him. He has mentioned three principles only. Then we are to gather that no political considerations entered into the matter?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. The only political consideration is justice and fair-play.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. If the right hon. gentleman will realize that, I have no doubt this clause will get through in a very short time. But that is the point that is to be dealt with, and I hope that will be elucidated.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. The hon. gentleman, if he comes with an open mind, will be satisfied before we get through.

Mr. FOSTER. Then I think we will have to ask somebody else. If the shortness of my right hon. friend's speech measures the amount of his information we will have to forgive him, but we must have the information.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER.

tion. I suppose some other member of the government will be prepared to give us the information.

Mr. OLIVER. For the province of Alberta the census was taken in 1901, and therefore had become an unreliable basis of information, because there has since been a large increase of population. It was therefore thought better to take as a basis the actual vote polled on the 3rd of November last. There were practically 20,000 votes polled in the new province of Alberta, exclusive of the district of Athabaska, and that would give a unit of 800 votes to each constituency, as you take in or do not take in the part of the country in which no vote was taken, as it was not represented.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. What does the Minister of the Interior estimate the population of the new province to be now, roughly?

Mr. OLIVER. The estimated population is 250,000, but there is no reliable data.

Mr. FOSTER. I cannot conceive that this is all the information we are to get. We might just as well move that this committee rise if we are not to be given more information than this. Do ministers think they are going to come down with an important thing like this, and that they are going into it without any explanation of the whole basis, and how they have arrived at the basis. The Prime Minister evidently knew nothing about it. Is the Minister of the Interior going to make the same confession? I may tell him straight that he will not get anywhere with his Bill until he makes the most ample and full explanation of the basis, the way in which he has applied the principles, and showed to us that it is fair and reasonable.

Mr. OLIVER. The map has been before the House for four or five weeks, the schedule has been before the House for four or five weeks. I have stated to the House the basis upon which the representation was made, and if that is not satisfactory I assume it is for the hon. gentleman to say wherein it is not satisfactory. I would say to him that while there is no effort on the part of members from the west supporting the government in any way to trespass upon this House, they are here, however, in support of their rights and of their dignity as members, and do not altogether accept the arrogant manner in which hon. gentlemen opposite seek to bulldoze members from the west on this subject.

Mr. FOSTER. Now, my right hon. friend will never get anywhere by attempting to bring up an argument of bulldozing and the like of that. Have we or have we not the right to a thorough and complete explanation of the way this distribution has been arrived at? If we have, the sooner the minister is taught to give up his small bit of