

was made of dividing that country up into electoral divisions? I have given that statement an emphatic denial. I was at a meeting when the boundary was discussed, whether it should be the 4th meridian. We sat there until 9.30 waiting for the hon. member for Edmonton, the present Minister of the Interior. I left at 9.30 o'clock after we saw that the boundary between the two provinces could not be satisfactorily adjusted and I again desire to emphatically deny that the question of dividing that country into local constituencies was ever mentioned in my presence.

Mr. SCOTT. I do not wish to impugn the veracity of my hon. friend from Calgary at all, but I make the statement that at that conference the proposition was put forward by myself in the shape of a formal motion that for each of the proposed provinces there should be a bi-party committee appointed from the representatives there present to deal with this matter of redistribution and our Conservative friends there immediately took the position that they would not take part.

Mr. M. S. McCARTHY. Who were the Conservative friends who took that position that they would not take part.

Mr. SCOTT. The hon. member for Calgary (Mr. M. S. McCarthy) makes the emphatic statement that he was not present and heard no such suggestion at all.

Mr. M. S. McCARTHY. I would like to have the name.

Mr. SCOTT. I distinctly recollect that Mr. Haultain was present, and I think my hon. friend from Alberta was also there.

Mr. HERRON. I state most emphatically I was not.

Mr. LAKE. And I also state most emphatically that I was not present.

Mr. OLIVER. At any rate we assume responsibility for having advised the government in this matter. We do not say that the government has taken our advice, but we take the responsibility of having advised it, and I think we would have been doing considerably less than our duty to our constituents if we had not done so. But I am not aware it was any part of our responsibility to ask members opposite to take part with us. They have their responsibility as we have ours, and perhaps they will say that we refused their offer to consult with regard to this matter. If they do not, then they must take the responsibility, just as well as we, of there having been no general discussion. We have no more responsibility in that respect than they. But what has been said here by the hon. member for Calgary (Mr. M. S. McCarthy) makes it quite evident that a joint discussion would have been absolutely useless. The contention he put before the House

made impossible that any agreement should be reached.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. Why?

Mr. OLIVER. If my hon. friend will be patient, I shall try to explain why. The first position taken by the hon. member for Calgary (Mr. M. S. McCarthy) is that the distribution of seats which was made by the local assembly after the election of 1902 was a proper basis of representation. He takes the ground that because the Northwest assembly made that distribution, it therefore must be right—a distribution which gave eight seats south of this township line of township 39 and six seats north.

Mr. M. S. McCARTHY. Did you not say 9 to 6 this afternoon?

Mr. OLIVER. I was speaking of the old district of Alberta. I am speaking now of the new province of Alberta to which we gave nine seats in the south to six in the north. But the Northwest assembly gave the old province of Alberta eight seats on the south to six in the north. In the votes that were polled on the 3rd November last, the six northern seats polled 9,817 against 9,666 polled in the eight southern seats. The hon. member takes that proportion of seats as a fair basis of representation, and I leave his argument to the House for its consideration. We say that it is not a fair basis.

Mr. BARKER. His argument was the very opposite.

Mr. OLIVER. The hon. member will pardon me for using my own ears. Starting out with the supposition that the southern country was entitled to eight representatives and the northern only to six, he then builds an argument which satisfies himself but which has no basis in fact. It is the simplest thing in the world to arrive at any result by eliminating anything you do not want and adding anything you do. By following this operation, my hon. friend arrived at the absurd calculation that there are 50,000 people north of the line and 150,000 south of it, or figures to that effect.

Mr. M. S. McCARTHY. I proceeded on the assumption of the Minister of Justice that there was a population of 173,000 there and made my calculation accordingly.

Mr. OLIVER. My understanding of my hon. friend's argument was that by this method he reached the conclusion that there are about one-third as many people north of this line as there are south. Take any standard you please which has any basis in fact, and you will see how absurd is that conclusion, and consequently must be the premises from which it was drawn.

Mr. BARKER. He said nothing of the kind.

Mr. OLIVER. Take for instance his suggestion that because customs receipts