

have also listened to the statements made by the hon. member for Calgary (Mr. M. S. McCarthy) and the hon. member for Montreal (Mr. Ames), and I am bound to say that no hon. gentleman can read the statements of those four hon. gentlemen and come to any other conclusion than that the figures given on the two sides are as far apart as Australia is from Canada. And yet the right hon. First Minister tells us that he wants to listen to other arguments from this side of the House before he answers the arguments advanced yesterday. If the right hon. gentleman wishes to shorten the debate on this question, the best plan he can adopt is to answer early in the debate the statements made by hon. gentlemen on this side of the House in order that other hon. gentlemen may not find it necessary to prepare themselves to prolong the debate. Surely the government ought to be ready to point out to the opposition in what respect the statements made by the hon. member for Calgary and the hon. member for St. Antoine are wrong. That can be done if the government is right; but any one reading the statements of the four hon. gentlemen who spoke cannot come to any other conclusion than that they derive their information from entirely different sources; therefore it is necessary that some explanation should be made by the government. This is an important question; and the idea of the government coming down with these two important measures, and having only the meagre statements made by the right hon. the First Minister and the hon. Minister of the Interior, is something I have not noticed in this House before on a serious question of this kind. In the case of our general distribution, we had more satisfaction than this. We are treated in a contemptible manner by the government on this question, and I am surprised at the course taken by the right hon. the First Minister on this occasion.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. The surprise of my hon. friend from East Elgin (Mr. Ingram), who is generally fair, is my own surprise. I am very much astonished at the surprise he manifests. When he says that there is a serious discrepancy between the figures furnished by the government and those furnished by my hon. friend from St. Antoine, I take direct issue with him. I say there is no serious difference at all between the figures furnished to the House by myself and my colleague of the Interior and those furnished by the hon. member for Calgary and the hon. member for St. Antoine. This is a very plain statement; let us verify it. I said yesterday that we based our information upon the number of votes recorded at the last Dominion election, the number of votes registered for the same, and the figures of population in the census of 1901. These were three, not all, of the sources of information upon which we proceeded. The number of votes re-

corded, as I obtained it from the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery, was 20,962. These figures were not disputed. According to the statement given to me by my hon. friend from Calgary, for which I acknowledge his courtesy, the number of votes recorded in the last election in the different constituencies of Alberta, with the exception of Peace River and Athabaska, is put at 20,700, a difference of 262. Is there any very serious discrepancy there? With regard to the number of votes registered in those constituencies, the figure I gave was 29,950, while the figure given to me by my hon. friend from Calgary was 30,077, a difference of 127. The addition in the one case was made by the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery from the books of the votation furnished to him; the same books were furnished to the hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House, and they made their own addition; yet the results correspond, with only the small discrepancies I have mentioned. Another source of information is the population according to the census of 1901. I gave the population for these various constituencies at 69,441. Up to the present moment I have not seen these figures challenged. Therefore, I say there is no difference or dispute as to the figures on which we base our division. I shall have further remarks to make on this subject, but for the moment I simply call the attention of my hon. friend from East Elgin to the fact that practically there is no difference between the figures given on one side and on the other.

Mr. INGRAM. My right hon. friend has been good enough to state the difference between the figures given by himself of the number of votes polled and the figures given by my hon. friend from Calgary. But the figures in regard to the number of post offices, the number of homestead entries and the number of school districts, have not yet been explained.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I want to keep to the discrepancy which my hon. friend alleged. He said we had given false information, which had been disputed. I said we had not. There is no discrepancy whatever. There are other sources of information. We proceeded to make up our minds also on the basis of the number of school districts, the number of post offices and the number of improvement districts. I have not seen the statements or the accuracy of the figures disputed; different conclusions have been drawn from them, that may be and I will come to discuss that directly. At the present moment I want to say—and I want this fact clearly put before the House—that so far as the figures brought down are concerned, there has been no dispute between the members on the two sides of the House. We have drawn conclusions from different sources. For instance, I said yesterday and repeat to-day one source of information which we took in order to arrive