

it is the first I have ever heard of the matter. I had always understood that there was a strong movement to have this question submitted to the judges.

Mr. FINLAY. I understood the hon. gentleman (Mr. Lake) to say that he had a letter from Mr. Haultain on the subject, and now he says he never heard of it.

Mr. LAKE. The letter that I received from Mr. Haultain invited me to meet other members of parliament and senators from the Northwest in conference during the progress of the Autonomy Bill discussion. That is the only letter I have had from Mr. Haultain on the subject. He did not mention the subject of constituencies—in fact, speaking from memory, he did not go into any details, but merely suggested that we should meet and discuss matters in general. I have always understood that, so far as the distribution of constituencies is concerned, it was only the Minister of the Interior (Mr. Oliver) who held out against this matter being submitted to the judges. That is the effect of rumours that I have heard from Conservatives, not from Liberals. The Northwest members, I understood, were in favour of this course, and there was simply the member for Edmonton who was opposed to it. Another matter discussed at the conference was the matter of one or two provinces. But, after all, these questions are apart from the question we ought to be discussing at the present moment. As the hon. members for Strathcona (Mr. Peter Talbot) and Edmonton (Mr. Oliver) admitted that they were responsible for the schedule for Alberta, I assume that the hon. member for Western Assiniboia and other Northwest Liberal members will take the responsibility for distribution in the new province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. OLIVER. I had occasion to correct one speaker on the other side in a statement similar to the one the hon. gentleman (Mr. Lake) has just made. I hope it will not be necessary for me to correct it again. Speaking for myself, I do not admit responsibility for the schedule for Alberta. I admit responsibility for having given advice with regard to the schedule for Alberta, but not responsibility for the schedule.

Mr. LAKE. The hon. gentleman will have to take the responsibility together with the hon. member for Strathcona. I think their speeches prove it very clearly.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. Does not the minister repudiate the boundaries?

Mr. OLIVER. The minister is supporting the Bill.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. Then he accepts the whole responsibility?

Mr. LAKE.

Mr. OLIVER. The government takes the whole responsibility.

Mr. LAKE. The Minister of the Interior and the hon. member for Strathcona (Mr. P. Talbot) have both spoken in very disparaging terms of the redistribution which took place in 1902 in the legislative assembly, and they have given various samples of what they consider to be the gerrymander which was created by that redistribution. In the first instance, I would like to say that that redistribution was decided on by a conference of all the members of the House. I doubt whether Mr. Haultain was present even on that occasion. The lines laid down were laid with regard to population, and a certain consideration of area. The population in the three districts at that time, each of which was entitled to a certain share of representation, was taken into consideration, and the population which was to be allowed to each was figured out. It was figured out that, working on these lines, the constituency of Alberta would get one member to every 4,700 population; the district of Assiniboia one member to 4,492; the district of Saskatchewan, one to 4,279. It will be noticed that the distribution, looked at from that point of view, was a fair one. There was only a margin of less than 5 per cent as between the amounts allowed to these three districts from the average of the whole. It was decided to interfere as little as possible with existing local constituencies, and that may account for a certain discrepancy in the total votes cast, but I do not think it is necessary to go into these figures, and the figures given by the hon. member for Strathcona (Mr. P. Talbot) are different in many respects from those I have, which were made out by the Northwest government. At the time of the redistribution we had a very lively opposition in the legislative assembly, who were ready to find fault on every pretext. It was just on the eve of an election; and surely if there had been any attempt at a gerrymander that would have been brought up in the House. But what do we find? Looking over the reports, I find for instance two objections were made by Mr. Patrick, of the district of Yorkton. The first was that there should be another representative up there, because he had an additional population of 5,000 Doukhobors, but he did not press that very hard. And it was shown him that his total population was a very fair one under the circumstances. He also thought there should be one more member in the House. It was found necessary to reduce the representation in the district of Saskatchewan by one. Mr. Mackay, of Prince Albert, also objected to losing one member from one of the constituencies of Prince Albert, which was cut off. Mr. Bennett simply objected to the Liberal executive having any finger in this redistribu-