

some other means of verifying this extraordinary increase from 242 whites and 2,395 half-breeds up to 5,000 whites and half-breeds. I think it may be taken as granted that the half-breeds have not been increasing to any very great extent, probably just the natural increase of the half-breeds. As we know, the Indian population has been pretty well at a standstill for a great number of years past, and I think we may take it for granted that the half-breed population has not been increasing to any very great extent, and that there has not been any immigration of half-breeds into that country either. We know that half-breeds are moving about the country, but if they moved from Athabaska they would go to Alberta in all probability, so it does not affect the argument.

Mr. OLIVER. Would it be because they have moved from Edmonton that they would not be in Athabaska after they had moved there?

Mr. LAKE. The reason I made the remark was that he is calculating a larger number of seats are due to northern Alberta on account of population than they are really entitled to, and so if he is gaining new half-breeds in northern Alberta, he must not count them in in Athabaska. Deducting the half-breeds, who are about stationary and of whom a very great number are likely enough in the eastern part of that territory, there has been an increase of white settlers. The increase in the number of whites was from 242 to 3,400 between the years 1901 and 1905; that is to say, that the number of whites in that country is fourteen times as great as it was. Taking that figure, it must be assumed that there has been an immigration into Athabaska of 850 whites per annum since 1901. Now, I would like to know whether the hon. minister can furnish us with any information which is likely to convince this House that such a large immigration went into that country every year within the last four years. First of all, what time do the immigrants for Athabaska and Peace River leave Edmonton? I presume that practically the whole of them pass through Edmonton on their way to that country. At about what time in the year do they commence to leave? At what time are the rivers open, and at what time does travel cease?

Mr. OLIVER. People travel between Edmonton and Peace River at all seasons of the year.

Mr. LAKE. How many immigrants per week go into that country on the average?

Some hon. MEMBERS. Oh.

Mr. LAKE. I think that when we have such an indefinite statement as that which has been submitted to the House, and when we have nothing to support it we have a

right to inquire as closely as we can and to see if it can be supported by other probable facts.

Mr. OLIVER. What is the argument?

Mr. LAKE. I am anxious to know whether the hon. minister is prepared to say if every week during these four years an average of about 15 immigrants started off and went up into the Athabaska or Peace River country.

Mr. OLIVER. The immigration department has not yet established an agency to check the immigration into Peace River.

Mr. LAKE. I thought the hon. minister might have been able to tell us from his own observations. He is living in Edmonton, he must know what is going on pretty well, and he must see these immigrants day after day starting off for the Peace River and Athabaska country, and it seems to me that he might assure this committee as to these facts, or if there is likely to be something more behind his statement than he has given us that there is this large white and half-breed population. How many per week has he himself seen? How many wagons at a time has he seen week after week starting up into that country?

Mr. OLIVER. They do not use wagons in the winter.

Mr. LAKE. Well, we will say sleighs if it suits the hon. gentleman better. The hon. gentleman apparently is not prepared to give any facts to substantiate his figures. He expects this committee and parliament to accept his estimate of 5,000 simply on an opinion expressed by some unknown gentleman. I think it is due to this House that it should have something more before it than simply telling it that is must accept that estimate of population and that it must give two members to represent that district because in the hon. minister's opinion there are something like 5,000 whites and half-breeds in that country. Since the House adjourned this afternoon I have been looking into a few of the census figures. We have had quoted to us on two or three occasions the census of 1901 and it seems to me that there are some interesting deductions to be obtained from these figures. For instance, I looked into the population of Alberta as given in the census of 1901 and the estimated population to the 1st of July of the present year, a few days hence, and I found that the population has increased nearly four times or 392 per cent. I work it out in this way: The total population of 1901 was 65,876. We will add the estimated population in the Medicine Hat district from the new province of Saskatchewan amounting to about 3,000. I think Medicine Hat itself had about 2,000 of that population. Now, we have to deduct from that the Indians who have not been immigrating into this country and whose population, as I think it will be