

hon. gentleman is in regard to all these matters. There was no principle acted upon in 1903 which affects the distribution of the ridings of this province, as the hon. gentleman claims. How does the principle of municipal and county boundaries apply? Does the hon. gentleman claim that it applies at all? I always understood there were no municipal and county boundaries in the province of Alberta, yet that is the grand principle upon which the Prime Minister and his colleagues and the hon. gentleman himself upheld the discrepancies to which he has called attention.

Now, so far as the whole question is concerned, the hon. gentleman tells us that he is acting upon an estimate of the population of the northern portion of the proposed province of Alberta. The hon. gentleman in making that statement, on the hearsay evidence of some person whom we have not before us, whom we have no chance of interrogating, a mere casual statement, I suppose, made in conversation, puts it forward as a reason for giving two members in the legislative assembly to that portion of territory which, according to the census of 1901, is entitled to about half a representative, and which does not certainly include more than three or four, or at the outside, 500 voters; in making that statement and bringing it forward as a reason, he is giving the best argument in the world for a reference of the question to some tribunal. Nothing could be more cogent.

When we ask him how it is that he gives to this part of the province two representatives, having regard to the census of 1901, having regard to the fact that we have no evidence as to what the increase of population is, how are we met by the hon. gentleman? Met by the statement that some person, on some unknown occasion, told him that he believed there are 5,000 people in there over and above Indians. And that is the way in which we are to proceed and make a division of the new province of Alberta. Let us look at the report of the census commissioner with regard to districts 24 and 25, the document to which the hon. gentleman has already called attention. 'Population of the Peace River district, No. 24.' I need not read the whole of it, but the totals are: Whites and half-breeds, 769; Indians, 955; total population, 1,724. Well, if you apply to that the proportion of electors which we obtained from the other portions of the province, we would have about 150, or at most 160 electors in the proposed district, 24, according to the census of 1901, while the unit of population entitling it to a member is at least 1,200. The hon. gentleman, upon some such hearsay, casual information as that, asks us to believe that 150 electors in 1901 have increased to 1,000 or 1,200 in 1905. Let us take the other district, No. 25. According to the same report

Mr. R. L. BORDEN.

made by the census commissioner, the total number of whites and half-breeds was 941; total number of Indians, 735; total population, 1,676. If you apply to this also the proportion of electors which we reach by referring to other portions of the province, we would have the number of electors in 1901 at 180 or 185. Now, Sir, the position seems very plain. Let us look at the first seven constituencies as proposed by the government, and we will take their own figures in this regard. The constituencies numbered 1 to 7 of the Bill have, according to the statement of the government, a voting population of 10,784, or an average of 1,540. The 11 constituencies numbered from 8 to 18 have a voting population of 13,264, or an average to each constituency of 1,206 electors; and the 7 constituencies 19 to 25 inclusive have a voting population of 5,902, giving an average to each of 843. If you group the whole 25 you have an average of about 1,200. Now let us look for a moment at a comparison of the constituencies 1 to 7, having a voting population of 10,784, and constituencies 19 to 25. If you add 400 for the electors in Athabaska, you have 6,302, representing a difference in the voting population between the first 7 constituencies in the south and the 7 northern constituencies, of no less than 4,482, or equal to a population entitled to 4 members. Well, there may be some justification for that, but for my part, notwithstanding the declamation of the Minister of the Interior, I fail to find any justification for it in anything that has been said by him or by the right hon. gentleman. That is the position as outlined by the government here to-day. The Minister of the Interior himself admits, in effect, that there is nothing beyond these vague statements to which he has called attention to lead us to believe that the population in the north is as great as he claims it to be. That, I repeat once more, is the best possible argument in favour of the motion of my hon. friend from Calgary, that the government should act upon that principle which they laid down in 1899, and should leave the delimitation of these divisions to a tribunal which will have an opportunity and means of making the necessary investigation, in order that justice may be done to all parties in that province.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. We stated upon introducing this Bill, and we have repeated it over and over again, that we have endeavoured to obtain some idea of what the population is at the present time in the Northwest Territories for the purposes of this distribution. We have stated that we have taken several sources of information, the vote registered, the vote polled, the census, the post offices, the school districts and the local improvement districts. My hon. friend (Mr. R. L. Borden) bases the whole of his argument upon two of these sources of information, upon the vote recorded and the vote registered. But, there is another