

distribution in 1902, there ought to be ten in the south and five in the north. I say that is not a correct contention. It may be a basis but you cannot depend on it alone; you must take other things into account. Taking it together with the recorded votes, and taking it with the census, I have come to the conclusion that the distribution which has been made is fair to the south and to the north. I believe that distribution should warrant the approbation of everybody and I challenge the criticism of my hon. friend. If you take these figures which cannot be disputed, it shows that the distribution is fair.

Mr. M. S. McCARTHY. It would be unfair to the south if based on the vote cast and unfair if based on the votes on the list; but you prefer to adopt a census which is five years old.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. You cannot take one thing alone; you have to consider a series of things and considering these we have come to the conclusion that the distribution is fair.

Mr. FOSTER. There is not an agreement between the First Minister and the Minister of the Interior—

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. As to what?

Mr. FOSTER. As to the basis upon which the distribution has been made. Their statements are as far apart as the poles. The Minister of the Interior said that while you might look at the registered vote as a matter of curiosity and may be as a little aid; that while you might take the population of 1901 as a matter of curiosity, as a guide it was worthless, that while you might take the number of post offices you simply did it because information was asked for and it might show a certain trend of population; that while you might take the improvement districts; taking all these together when you had done that you absolutely throw them away as far as a determining factor was concerned, and you took one thing and one thing only, and that was the actual number of votes polled. The Minister of the Interior said:

The definite division of the constituencies is based on the vote actually polled on the 3rd November, as we believe that was the closest and most recent date upon which we could get information we could rely upon. The information with regard to post offices, homestead entries and other matters of that kind was arrived at in order to bear, not upon the question of division of constituencies, but on the question as to whether the bulk of the population was in one end of the country or the other. That information therefore would not have any direct bearing on the propriety of the actual division made, but would be merely corroborative evidence to show whether the trend of population was in this direction or that.

There cannot be a more clear-cut statement than that made by the hon. gentle-

man (Mr. Oliver) who in conjunction with one other gentleman from the west is said to be the father of this schedule, to have brought it down ready made and fresh from the mill; to have got the imprint of the Minister of the Interior upon it and got it into the Bill. If any one ought to know the child it should be the father; if anybody has a right to speak definitely upon this it should be the Minister of the Interior. In view of that statement of the minister, all this airy talk about the number of post offices, agricultural productions, homestead entries and the like is simply stuffing and padding. According to the Minister of the Interior the basis upon which you have cut out these twenty-five constituencies is the actual vote polled in each district except two where there was no poll. That was stated not only once by the Minister of the Interior, but reiterated. At another time yesterday he said:

There are many others in confirmation, but I think my hon. friend is in error in suggesting, as my right hon. friend the Prime Minister has already said, that reliance was placed on the number of post offices or local improvement districts or upon anything except the actual number of votes polled because this is the actual basis of distribution. All the rest is in confirmation.

There is the basis of your distribution, and the distribution was made on this basis before any attempt was made to get information to buttress it up. I venture to state, see whether it will be contradicted, that that schedule of distribution as it is now was practically finished before the government had before it any information as to improvement districts, as to the number of school-houses, as to agricultural products, and these other things about which they have been talking. The Minister of the Interior contends that that is the actual basis, that, the other is for confirmation, and when the matter came to the point of discussion and you had to sustain your position you look around for these other things. What reliance can the First Minister place upon the number of post offices in the north as compared with the number of post offices in the south to show why there should be a certain number of constituencies in the one and a certain number in the other? Will the number of post offices be any index to population? There is one post office in Calgary and there is one post office serving a district in Stony Plain; but is that very fact any indication that one place has a larger population than the other. If you took the revenue of these post offices, if you could know the letters received and sent or the number of people actually served by each post office, then you might have an index to the population, but the ministers say they have not that information and they did not attempt to prepare it in answer to questions put. I put it to the Prime Minister as a