

two, or two and a-quarter into three, or something of that kind. But to go so far as to say that 250 people shall be entitled to a seat when every other part of the province, on an average, must have 1,200—it seems to me an outrage, unless the hon. gentleman can give some explanation which we have not hitherto heard.

But, let us see what there is in his statement of the area to be represented. Do individuals own this area? The 250 people who are to be represented in this area will have their own land. They do not own this immense area but who does own it? The Dominion of Canada. The government of this Dominion are deliberately retaining under their ownership the whole of this immense territory and saying, that the fact that the territory is unoccupied is a reason for having additional representatives for that part. Surely the people who have built up the lower portions of the province, built up towns of 10,000, created manufacturing and developed ranching and industries and all that sort of thing are more entitled to representation than the government of Canada who own wild lands up there and hold them for settlement. I defy the hon. Minister of the Interior to show that there are on the voters' list at the present time more than 500, yet, without the slightest excuse that anybody has suggested, he is giving these 500 voters two seats, I ask an explanation and I think I am entitled to it. That is one point that I thought the right hon. Prime Minister would have been able to explain, but in his absence I do not know whether the hon. Minister of Justice will do it; if not we must accept an explanation from the recently appointed Minister of the Interior.

Mr. OLIVER. Mr. Chairman, I very much regret the Prime Minister is not in his place to answer my hon. friend (Mr. Barker). I am sure he would give him his best attention and if I might make a suggestion it seems to me that this question has been answered by the Prime Minister as well as by other members who have spoken on this side of the House. The question that the hon. gentleman asks is: Why should a small population living in a large territory be given the same representation as a larger population living in a smaller territory. I think that is his question.

Mr. BARKER. I asked an answer to the specific case I put. There is an immense territory undeveloped remaining the property of the Dominion and occupied by a few people who represent 500 votes. I ask why the people occupying a small portion of that large territory and having only 500 votes should get two seats when it will require five times that many to get one elsewhere.

Mr. OLIVER. In regard to the specific case it has already been stated and stated

Mr. BARKER.

again and restated that a small population is occupying a very large territory.

Mr. BARKER. It is not.

Mr. OLIVER. Of course, that is the misfortune of this discussion. We are not able to come to the same conclusion. The hon. member says that a small population is occupying a small part of a large territory.

Mr. BARKER. Yes, that is it because the government own the big territory.

Mr. OLIVER. We say that a small population is occupying a large part of a large territory and the circumstances being as they are, if this territory is to be adequately represented it must have two members. The conditions of travel, the situation of the people, the divergence of interests in different parts of this great territory are such that if it is to be represented adequately and intelligently, or in other words if it is to be represented at all in the legislature of that new province, it must be represented by two members and therefore it should be divided into two constituencies. We do not expect our hon. friends to see the matter as we see it. We have had the experience of the last three days of discussion to inform us on that point. We can only state and restate the position we have taken and hope that it will commend itself to the majority of the House. Though perhaps we are not able to bring our friends to view this matter as we view it from our statement of the case, perhaps we can induce them to view it in something the same light by comparison with other instances as for instance when the Redistribution Bill relating to the seats of this parliament was passed in 1903. In the Northwest Territories at that time, according to the census there was a matter of a little over 150,000 people, and according to the unit of population these 150,000 people were entitled to six members, but this House saw fit in its wisdom—I think properly taking into consideration all the different interests to be represented and the probable increase in population—to grant ten members to the Northwest Territories instead of only six which they would have been entitled to on the unit of population. The principle is exactly the same in regard to the district of Athabaska. The hon. member may suggest that the conditions are more strained in regard to the district of Athabaska, but on that point he has not any better information than we have, and our information is that the conditions are not strained in the district of Athabaska. We regret very much that we have not later census information than is available, but we have other information in regard to the increase of population, in regard to the increase of trade and in regard to development generally which leads us to believe that there is a comparatively large population in the western part of Athabaska to-day. The fact