

least. It bears the stamp of no commission, of no official investigation; it is simply given to us, and we are told to take it as we will. But if report be true, that schedule was prepared several months ago. If we are to believe current rumour, it was incubated in room 48 of this House, it emanated from under the hands of the hon. member for Edmonton (Mr. Oliver) and the hon. member for Strathcona (Mr. Talbot) at that time, and it comes to this House—as they themselves acknowledge—the product of their ingenuity.

Mr. OLIVER. Will my hon. friend allow me to correct him? I did not say that it comes to the House as a product of our ingenuity. I said that we gave advice to the government and were responsible for the advice we gave, but I did not say that it was followed.

Mr. AMES. Will my hon. friend point out in what respect that advice was departed from?

Mr. OLIVER. I do not see why I should. We are here supporting the Bill and there is no need why we should go behind it.

Mr. M. S. McCARTHY. Will you point out wherein your advice in any particular was not accepted by the government?

Mr. OLIVER. That is not any part of my duty.

Mr. M. S. McCARTHY. Is the Bill in any particular different from the one originally prepared?

Mr. OLIVER. I am not here to answer questions of that nature. I am supporting the Bill as it stands, and am responsible for the advice I gave with regard to it.

Mr. AMES. I take it that the Minister of the Interior will not entirely deny the soft impeachment that he was largely, if not wholly, instrumental with his colleague from Strathcona in the preparation of this schedule, and that the government, having the greatest consideration for the knowledge and sense of justice of himself and his colleague, accepted their recommendations almost entirely. We may take that for granted. We would like also to know whether any one else was consulted in the preparation of this schedule and to what extent. We have heard that the premier of the Northwest Territories (Mr. Haultain) was present at a meeting, but we do not know that his advice was accepted to any extent. We would also like to know if the advice of the hon. member for Alberta (Mr. Herron) and the hon. member for Calgary (Mr. M. S. McCarthy), which might have been given if asked for, was requested by the hon. minister. The hon. member for Alberta (Mr. Herron) seems to have been asked with regard to his own corner of the province, whether he was satisfied, the night before the schedule was submitted to the

House. The hon. member for Calgary (Mr. McCarthy) seems to have been left altogether out of the deliberation, although he has shown us he has some knowledge of the conditions obtaining in the west and would therefore be one whose opinion should be of some value. It would be interesting to know also whether the local members of the constituencies—the 14 or 15 which fall within the new province—were consulted, or whether their constituencies are to be carved out without their co-operation in any way. We also should know whether any opportunity was given for interested parties to be heard, whether delegations were invited, or any opportunity given those who may have felt aggrieved in the matter to make their views known. It would appear that this schedule had been prepared without that wide opportunity having been given interested parties which we might expect in such a delicate matter. In fact it is evident that the hon. the Minister of the Interior, somewhat like Moses of old, has come down with his tables of stone and asks us to accept them as though carved by divine power, and as though they were too sacred to be altered in the least jot or tittle by any profane hand. I only hope that before the debate is through, the Minister of the Interior will follow the precedent of the law giver of old and find it advisable to dash his tables of stone to the ground and get new ones.

But the opposition have been invited by the Prime Minister to point out wherein they think the government are not acting wisely in the words which he uttered at the opening of this debate. On the 8th May, 1905, the right hon. gentleman said: I believe it is the intention of the government to give substantial justice to all parties concerned. Let us then start on that basis. The First Minister has expressed, not only his own desire, but no doubt the desire also of his colleagues, to do justice in this redistribution; and therefore in the hope that, if we show that injustice is done, he will be the first to remedy it, we shall continue the discussion.

It is not an easy task to divide a province into electoral divisions. Certainly it is not an easy task to do so justly, although we might almost imagine from the extent of the injustice in this schedule that it had been an easy task. The government, in clause 12 of the Bill, have given us two of the factors which they have evidently taken into consideration in dealing with this matter, namely, that the electoral divisions shall be defined with due regard to the distribution of population and existing local divisions, which we take to mean the divisions in the Northwest legislature at present. But there are other factors which should be taken into consideration in making distribution. There are the physical features of the country. It is inadvisable that a mountain range, for example, should separate two parts of a constituency, or that an unfordable river should cut it in twain, and it is equally inad-