

therefore realize the extent and importance of the population to which has been given a representation of two members in the new provincial assembly.

Well, we need not perhaps stop at that; it is not fair perhaps to stop at that, because we have certain further information derived from my hon. friend the Minister of the Interior. Some one told some persons who told the Minister of the Interior that there is a population of 5,000 souls in these two ridings exclusive of Indians—or perhaps it may be that some one told my hon. friend that directly. I think that was the way he put it to the House—some person, at some indefinite time, at some unknown place, the person being also unnamed and unknown to this House, has informed the Minister of the Interior that these two combined electoral divisions contain at the present time 5,000 persons exclusive of Indians. Well, I venture to think that if you look at the other sources of information upon which reliance has been placed by the government with respect to other portions of the constituency, we might discount that statement a great deal. For my part I should be extremely surprised if it could be proved by any evidence worth the name that there are more than 2,500 persons at the present time in those two electoral divisions, not including Indians. But let us take the statement of the Minister of the Interior; let us take his statement, which it was not even worth while to put in writing, of which it was not worth while to give any details; let us assume that there are in these two electoral divisions at the present time 5,000 people outside of Indians, and what have you? You have 245,000 people in the new province of Alberta to whom is allotted a representation of 23 members in the new legislature, and you have a supposed 5,000 people in the northern portion of that constituency to whom two representatives are allotted. That is to say, to one-fiftieth of the assumed population of the province of Alberta a representation of two is given, and to all the rest, to the other forty-nine-fiftieths of that population, a representation of 23 is given. Now, there can be no excuse for that; there can be no justification for it; there can be no apology for it. I do not know the motives which influenced the Minister of the Interior and the Prime Minister in forcing this upon the House. We can only guess at them. But it seems to be a transaction which is worthy of being characterized in the strongest possible terms that parliamentary usage will permit. It seems to me to be indecent and indefensible that 5,000 persons in the northern part of that constituency should be given a representation of two members, while to 245,000 persons 23 members are allotted, and that this should be done by hon. gentlemen in this House who stand up and state that they are solely desirous of distributing the representation of that province according to the standards of fair-play, according to

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equality of population and other similar considerations. It is perhaps inadvisable to express our opinion as to why this is done, why a population hitherto absolutely unrepresented in the provincial legislature should be given four times the voice in the new province that any similar number of persons in any other part of the province receive under the terms of this distribution.

Another provision to which I desire to call attention for a few moments is that contained in section 16. This has been discussed very fully. I will sum up what I have to say with regard to that in a very few words. The argument has been made not only by private members on the other side of the House, but by ministers of the Crown as well, not, I think, by the right hon. gentleman, but by some of his colleagues, that an obligation is imposed upon parliament to pass this legislation because of a compact which was made in 1870 at the time the Territories came into the confederation. That argument was disposed of by the right hon. gentleman the other evening, and it was disposed of by my hon. friend the Minister of Justice on the same evening. If there was any compact such as that which has been relied upon, it extended not only to separate schools in the Northwest Territories, but to the use of the French language. A disclaimer was made by the Solicitor General, concurred in by the Prime Minister, both of whom declared that no such compact existed under anything that took place in 1870; therefore, so far as that is concerned we come down to what the Minister of Justice quoting from the judgment of a court, calls a parliamentary compact, and we find the obligation to enact this legislation, if we find it anywhere, in the statute of 1875. The Prime Minister and his colleagues have taken away from themselves that argument; they have taken it away deliberately, with their eyes open, in answer to the motions of my hon. friend from Labelle (Mr. Bourassa) and my hon. friend from Beauharnois (Mr. Bergeron), because they say that there is no compact by reason of the Act of 1877, and I challenge any distinction between the Act of 1877 and the Act of 1875 in that regard. Therefore, I am free to state upon the authority of the Prime Minister himself, upon the authority of his Minister of Justice and of his Solicitor General, upon the authority of every member of the government who combatted this motion, that there was no compact contained in the Act of 1875, because otherwise the right hon. gentleman and his colleagues would have felt themselves obliged to accede to the motions which they voted down. Therefore, we come down after all to the question of constitutional power, of constitutional right, and as to whether it is sound policy in this regard to limit the rights of the new provinces. I do not admit that there is any constitutional power; I deny that there is any constitutional right, and I deny further