

these discrepancies in old constituencies have been tolerated by Conservatives, but now they threaten that they will keep the House in session until the snow flies before they will submit to a discrepancy in the far off province of Alberta. They will go through these constituencies with a jack plane and a plumb line and a square and a level, and they will see that they are pared right down to a hairs' breadth of equality, or they will keep this House in session until next Christmas. Well, if these gentlemen want any credit for a sense of justice they have a noble work to do right at their doors in regard to matters they are better acquainted with than they are with those of far off Alberta. My hon. friend from Argensteuil (Mr. Perley) might show a sense of justice by resigning his seat and bunching his constituency up with one of the other small constituencies so as to remove the injustice done to his friend from St. Antoine (Mr. Ames). This would be a practical display of his sense of justice, but I have heard no mention that he has any intention of sacrificing himself on that altar.

But he is prepared to sacrifice the well-being of this country, of this very district of Alberta which he purports to protect; to sacrifice the time and energy of members of this House; but he will not sacrifice his own seat to his sense of justice. This condition which I have referred to is not confined to the province of Quebec; it prevails in Ontario as well. I see my hon. friend from Peel (Mr. Blain) sitting right alongside the hon. member for St. Antoine (Mr. Ames). My hon. friend from Peel has been a member of this House for two parliaments. He sat in the previous parliament for a constituency which according to the census, had a population of 13,687, as against 47,000 in the constituency of the hon. member for St. Antoine. But we do not need to go to the province of Quebec to show a discrepancy. While the hon. member for Peel sat here with 13,687 people at his back the hon. gentleman (Mr. W. F. Maclean) who then represented East York sat here as the representative of 40,405 people. Three of the people represented by the then member for East York had just as much right in this parliament as one of those represented by the hon. member for Peel. But my hon. friend from Peel did not offer objection to that condition of affairs. I know that the wrong has been, to some extent, righted since that time; but I have not heard that the hon. gentleman (Mr. Blain) manifested any great enthusiasm in supporting that change. Let me instance the province of Nova Scotia, from which the hon. leader of the opposition comes (Mr. R. L. Borden) and which he represented in the last parliament. Of course, the discrepancies are not quite so marked in that province as in some others, for reasons which are apparent. The county of Richmond, Nova Scotia, was represented in the last parliament, as it is in this parliament, by one mem-

Mr. OLIVER.

ber. According to the last census, its population was 13,515. The county of Cumberland, also represented by one member, had a population at the time of the last census of 36,168. This cannot be justified on the ground of difference between rural and urban constituencies, for both of these are rural constituencies. Both these cases were known about when the Redistribution Bill was going through this House in 1903, but I did not hear the leader of the opposition (Mr. R. L. Borden) make the walls of this chamber ring with denunciations of that condition. If he believes in the principle of equality in representation, that would have been a good time for him to assert his love of fair-play. But he was not heard on that occasion, as I understand. He waits until the case of the province of Alberta comes up for discussion and then he joins in the denunciations of unfair treatment on the ground that there is a difference, according to the calculations of his own supporters, of 10 per cent between north and south. And, according to their own statement, the fairest proposition for redistribution within their knowledge was that of the Transvaal, and in that case the very law itself allows a difference of 10 per cent.

Mr. AMES. But it does not say that all constituencies in one part shall be over 10 per cent and all the constituencies in another part shall be under 10 per cent.

Mr. OLIVER. I presume that my hon. friend (Mr. Ames) can point out the clause in the law of the Transvaal which says that the constituencies in our district shall not—

Mr. AMES. No, but the spirit of British fair-play, which is likely to prevail where that distribution is to be made, would be a sufficient guarantee against that.

Mr. OLIVER. I think the district of Alberta and this House of Commons are quite as British as is the Transvaal. When the hon. gentleman (Mr. Ames) goes to the Transvaal for his example of British fair-play he is travelling a little off the line, especially is he unfortunate in bringing in that comparison in the Canadian House of Commons. If the Transvaal is British today, the answer to the question why it is British came in considerable degree from this Dominion of Canada.

Mr. ALCORN. With the hon. minister's (Mr. Oliver's) permission, I would like to ask him a question. Are we to understand that he is arguing for inequality of representation?

Mr. OLIVER. No.

Mr. ALCORN. Then, why did he not say that these discrepancies were wrong in 1903?

Mr. OLIVER. Because I take it for granted that they are not improper discrep-