

did not elect any? That would have been a much better illustration than the one he gave. If he had taken a dozen rotten boroughs in Great Britain as they existed before 1832, he would have found much better illustrations of inequality than any he has given to-day. But we are not dealing with these at the present moment. We are dealing with the representation of the proposed province of Alberta, and I must confess that I expected to hear from my right hon. friend something different to that with which he has just concluded. What conditions make it necessary to give these supposed 5,000 people—because they do not really exist—two members I have not heard, except something about community of interest. The answer to that is that we are not disturbing that principle, because the proposal is that they shall all be represented by one member. The other suggestion is the feeble one, that they must have two members in order that they may be able to see their representatives. That seems to me extraordinary enough to provoke a smile. There are say 800 or 1,000 electors there according to the argument of hon. gentlemen opposite, though not supported by any sufficient basis, and we must give one member to each 500 of these in order that he may have the privilege of seeing his constituents and they him. What guarantee have we that if we give two representatives their constituents will see them any oftener than they would see one? Is there not a mail service there? How many of our constituents do we see in the course of a year or four years? Is not ninety-nine-one-hundredths of the business which each member in this House transacts with his constituents conducted by correspondence? The hon. junior member for Halifax represents at least 18,000 electors. How many of these does he see in the course of a year? If he saw the whole 18,000 in the course of a year I think we might expect from him an early intimation of his intention to resign his seat, because it would take more than the 24 hours of every day to transact his business with them. Let us apply common sense and practical experience to this question. These matters are not transacted by personal interviews; they cannot be. The business of members with their constituents is transacted by correspondence, and the suggestion that there should be two members in order that they might spend their time travelling up and down these rivers in order to transact business in regards to roads and bridges, and so forth, is so trivial that I hesitate to characterize it in the terms that naturally come to one's tongue. The main test to which we must go back is the test of population. I do not deny that there may be other considerations, but there are none brought to the attention of this committee that in any way would make it

necessary to give to those who are supposed to live in this part of the province of Alberta four times the representation accorded to those who reside in other parts. The right hon. gentleman thinks the best course is to proceed to consider the limits of the constituencies. I do not see how we shall make very much progress in that way, because after all we shall have to come back to the question whether 5,000 men in one constituency shall have the same representation as is given to 20,000 in other constituencies. That is the question that will face us in the end however much we may go over this schedule; but if the right hon. gentleman would prefer to let this amendment stand for the moment and go over the delimitation of the constituencies, I do not know that there is any particular objection to that, except that I do not want to have the matter decided without further discussion.

Mr. OLIVER. There is no use in our threshing over the same word time after time, making the same statements, each declaring that he does not see what the other needs. I think my hon. friends on the other side are getting thrashed so far. There is a well-defined difference of policy, as I understand, between the two sides of the House. And, once the issue is taken on the question of policy and the position of each side clearly stated before the country, that should be enough, and the business of the House should be allowed to proceed.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. It is proceeding.

Mr. OLIVER. Not so far.

Mr. BARKER. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Oliver) is interrupting now. We are waiting for an answer from the First Minister (Sir Wilfrid Laurier).

Mr. OLIVER. Perhaps I may be allowed to say that, as I understand the difference of policy, it is this: Our hon. friends on the other side claim that the only test in regard to distribution of seats should be population.

Mr. BARR. Oh, no.

Mr. OLIVER. That is what I understand to be the trend and result of the argument of hon. gentlemen opposite.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Who stated that?

Mr. OLIVER. I think that my hon. friend (Mr. R. L. Borden) has argued ever since he first touched this subject to that effect. If not I have misunderstood him.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. The hon. gentleman certainly did misunderstand me. And he could not have been paying attention to the debate, for only five minutes ago, I stated that the distribution might be affected by other conditions, but I had heard of none which should affect it to the extent proposed.