

to take practical steps in that direction. I greatly regret that from the action taken by the government it seems impossible for us to obtain that independent commission for this purpose. There is just one thing further I want to say, that is, that I have been making this argument on the basis of the votes polled. I consider that that was the only fair way to look at the matter, because the Minister of the Interior had told us most distinctly that that was the basis upon which he had made the distribution.

Mr. SCOTT. That is the point I questioned my hon. friend about a few moments ago—whether he had not made his map on the basis of the votes cast.

Mr. LAKE. I made that map on what I considered to be the fairest basis—the number of voters on the list. I have made my criticism of the government's proposal on the basis of the number of votes polled, because that was the basis on which they had made the distribution. In criticising their distribution, it seems to me to be only fair to take the basis they set for themselves. This is what the Minister of the Interior said:

The definite division of the constituencies is based on the vote actually polled on the 3rd November as the closest and most recent date upon which reliable information can be got.

I myself consider the fair basis on which to make the distribution is the number of voters placed on the list for the election of the 3rd of November last. The enumerators who drew up those lists were government employees of the administration here at Ottawa, and I presume that they would endeavour to do their duty to the best of their ability. At any rate, they would endeavour to put as large a number of names on the list as possible of persons entitled to vote. That was the nearest I thought we could get to a fair distribution. I do not pretend that that would be an absolutely positive standard. It is impossible to declare that of any basis, except a census taken within a month of the drawing up of the schedule, because of the rapidity with which the population of the Northwest is changing at the present time. I do not think I need add anything further to what I have said with regard to this distribution. The figures which I have read, provided by the government in regard to the schedules which they have submitted to the House, speak for themselves far more eloquently than I could possibly hope to do.

Mr. LAMONT. Would the hon. gentleman state which of the northern constituencies he objects to, or which he has cut out in his distribution?

Mr. LAKE. I handed the hon. gentleman my map a couple of days ago, and he knows exactly what it is.

Mr. LAKE.

Mr. LAMONT. I am at liberty, then, to lay that on the table?

Mr. LAKE. I have no objection at all. He can put it anywhere he likes; he can put it on 'Hansard' if he likes. I am prepared to stand by that distribution as a far fairer one than that presented to us by the government. I merely desire to point out and to accentuate the fact that in spite of the statement of the Prime Minister that the prime object was as far as possible to give equality of numbers in the different electoral districts, and in spite of the statement of the Minister of the Interior to which I have just referred, that the definite division of the constituencies was based on the votes actually polled on the 3rd of November, I find that the schedule has apparently been drawn up with an absolute disregard of all the principles which were laid down as those which guided the government in making the distribution. A distribution has been made based, it seems to me, if it was based on anything at all, on the vaguest and most sanguine estimates of the prospective population of the northern part of the province, and less sanguine estimates of the prospective population of the southern portion of the province. This distribution practically gives double the representation, man for man, to the newer population who are going into the newer country which is being opened up to the north. That population is composed largely of late arrivals who do not understand the political questions of the day in Canada, and who are far too busy, as all men who go into a new country are, in getting started, to study these questions and to form personal opinions upon them. And over this population it cannot be doubted that the Dominion government exercises a considerable amount of influence. Only half the representation to which they are entitled on a fair distribution is apparently given to the older settlements of the south—the men who have built up the country, who have taken such a leading part in governing it up to the present, and who, I think, have governed it with a very fair amount of success. The distribution shows the most extraordinary discrepancies in individual constituencies, varying from 178 votes cast in Humboldt and 277 cast in Redberry in the recent election—and the votes cast at the recent election is the basis upon which these constituencies were constructed—to 1,930 in South Qu'Appelle and 2,594 cast in the district of Salteaux. That is to say a voter in Humboldt practically exercises as much voting influence as fourteen in the old district of Salteaux, and a voter in Redberry exercises as much influence as seven in the district of South Qu'Appelle.

Mr. LAMONT. Will the hon. gentleman say whether in his opinion those American settlers have gone into Humboldt and Redberry in such large numbers, but who had not been long enough in the country to vote