

Mr. OLIVER. We have not taken the information in regard to post offices for each constituency, we have taken it merely as between the two ends of the province, between the north and the south, divided on the line of township 38, as that seemed to be the question that was in contention. We find that there are 110 post offices south of that line and 118 north of that line, not including those in the district of Athabaska. There are 139 school districts south of that line and 269 north of it. Of local improvement districts, there are 22 in the Dominion electoral district of Edmonton, 50 in the Dominion electoral district of Strathcona, 25 in the Dominion electoral district of Calgary and 7 in the Dominion electoral district of Alberta.

Mr. FOSTER. I do not understand the pertinence of that local improvement section.

Mr. OLIVER. The local improvement district stands in the same position as a township municipality in Ontario.

Mr. FOSTER. How does that bear on this matter?

Mr. OLIVER. It indicates the density of population; that is, where there are local improvement districts there are people in considerable numbers who are paying taxes for the improvement of their roads. Where there are no local improvement districts the inference is that the people are more scattered or less numerous, and that is the reason why they are not formed into these districts.

Mr. FOSTER. On the south of the dividing line how many local improvement sections are there? If we are going to have reference to that dividing line we want this information respecting it.

Mr. OLIVER. Forty south and 64 north.

Mr. FOSTER. You say there are 139 school districts south and 269 north?

Mr. OLIVER. Yes.

Mr. FOSTER. How many schools?

Mr. OLIVER. The number of schools would correspond with the number of districts.

Mr. FOSTER. It might or it might not. If you have the schools let us have the school population.

Mr. OLIVER. We have not the school population.

Mr. FOSTER. I do not see that the number of school districts gives you much to go upon.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. That is the very basis.

Mr. FOSTER. It is simply the absolute bare number of school districts.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I assume there is one school in each school district.

Mr. FOSTER. You might have a school district and no school.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I would not assume that there are school districts and no schools. People organize themselves into school districts because there are no schools. No districts are organized until there are people and the best evidence that there is population in a locality is that they have organized school districts.

Mr. PERLEY. There might be some schools with 5 children and some with 100. It is hardly fair to take the school districts alone. If we had the number of school children it would be something to go upon.

Mr. FOSTER. We should not only have the number of schools but the number attending the schools.

Mr. OLIVER. Hon. gentlemen are not at all bound to accept this statement as a basis of calculation. They asked for it and we gave it. The school question is not under our control here and we are not able at the moment to lay our hands on the information that hon. members think necessary. But we give them what we have.

Mr. FOSTER. The pertinence of that lies here that you are looking for something to base your action upon and it seems that you have based it simply upon the number of school districts. A fairer basis would be to get the number of schools and the number of children attending these schools in each district. Where will the number of school districts lead you unless you know whether there are 5, 10 or 50 children attending a certain school? You do get something which is of the value if you find the number of children attending the schools in the different districts, but if this is all the information that the hon. minister has on the point, of course, we cannot cavil at him as far as making up his mind on such data is concerned; only, the data might be broader—that is all.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. Have we all the underlying principles now?

Mr. FOSTER. We have the post office, but again I might point out that the post office does not indicate much. You might have a post office where there are ten farms and you might have a post office which would probably serve a large colony. Simply the number of post offices authorized is open to the same objection as the number of school districts and even more. I know for instance that where there is a very small colony of five, or six, or eight farmers living a long way from a town the object of the department is, if possible, to give them a post office, but the number of people that the post office accommodates is very small whilst a town of