

Mr. M. S. McCARTHY. Do not postpone it too long.

Mr. OLIVER. I shall not be long; we do not keep you waiting long. The evidence that the southern country of which my hon. friend properly speaks highly has received a large accession of population in recent years is not subject, and in the nature of things cannot be subject, to that density of population which the purely agricultural Saskatchewan valley is subject to. That is something that cannot be gainsaid and when we consider this matter we are bound to consider it in the light of facts and not of imagination.

Mr. M. S. McCARTHY. What portion of the country do you mean by the Saskatchewan valley, the mere valley of the river or what? You can throw a cat across the river.

Mr. OLIVER. My hon. friend forgets that he is not speaking in a court just now.

Mr. M. S. McCARTHY. I want to know.

Mr. OLIVER. He does not need to ask to know that when you speak of the valley you speak of the drainage. It is not of the river, not of the mere bed in which the river flows that you speak in that way.

In regard to the points at which there are settlements in the districts of Athabaska and Peace River, I wish to inform my hon. friend that there are settlements in the proposed district of Athabaska at Slave Lake, Whitefish Lake, Waluseau, Calling Lake, Grand Rapids, Mehumay, Red River, Cheyboyan, Fond du Lac, Smith's Landing, in Peace River at Sturgeon Lake, Grand Puine, Spirit River, Quinegan, Peace River, Crossing, Wolverine Point, Hayward, Vermillion, Little Red River.

As has already been said by the premier it is absolutely impossible for any man adequately to represent or intelligently secure the representation of these two districts. It is possible for two men to do so. The two rivers offer means of communication. They represent two diverse interests. Along the Athabaska the country is not supposed to be agricultural; it is a mineral, timber and fur-bearing and fishing country, it has a larger population at the present time. The Peace River is a country of great agricultural possibilities and of great agricultural prospects and looking to the development of that northern country it would be most manifestly unfair that the representation of the agricultural Peace River country should be placed at the disposal of the vote of the Athabaska river country. If we are going to do the fair and reasonable thing by this province, we must give representation according to the interests to the affected, according to the development to be secured and to ignore the possibilities and the necessities of that immense area of country on the argument put forward by

Mr. OLIVER.

my hon. friend, because there is only one post office, because it would cost some money to hold the elections there, because the representation can be made just as well by somebody who knows nothing about it as by somebody who does—I say these I think are not arguments that will appeal to this committee or to the House. I think we have made a representation that will appeal to the fair-minded people of Alberta as giving representation according to population and according to the diversity of interest and the area and progress of the province. The contention that an injustice has been done I submit has not been made out before the House. I submit it cannot be made out, and as I said in the beginning it would certainly be a very fortunate body of judges who would give a decision favourable to a proposal now before the House and escape criticism as active partisans by hon. gentlemen when their position had been ignored.

Mr. AMES. As one of those members who have been, with the hon. member for Calgary (Mr. M. S. McCarthy), working out calculations from the figures which have formed the basis of this discussion, I desire to contribute my views to this debate on somewhat the same lines. I do not profess to have as intimate a knowledge of the country as has my hon. friend the Minister of the Interior, but on the other hand I am not altogether in ignorance of our great west, having on several occasions visited the provinces in question. Deeming it of the greatest importance that this House, in defining the electoral divisions for the new provinces should act with absolute fairness, and being firmly convinced that the proposition of the government is not an absolutely fair one, I wish to point out in what respects I consider it wanting.

We are about to form a new province, we are about to create a local government for that province, and it is essential that we should provide for a fair representation of the popular will in this new legislature we are about to call into being. It is for this ostensible object that the government has submitted the schedule we are now discussing; and in criticising the schedules and the method of their preparation, the opposition are acting strictly within their duty. We propose what we believe to be a much fairer method. We on this side demand that this question be left to a commission of judges, who shall arrange the boundaries of the constituencies, and we do this in the belief that thereby the people will be satisfied and the ends of justice achieved. As I have said, the opposition criticise, in the first place, the method by which this schedule was prepared and submitted to this House. We have the plan, we have the schedule, but there is no official authorization of any kind. We do not know whence it came, as far as that is indicated by anything on the face of it at