

shows the redistribution as made at Ottawa and a third the redistribution now proposed.

Mr. MURRAY wished to draw the attention of the Provincial Secretary and the House to the position of the residents of the District of Nipissing. He was familiar with that locality and the wants of the people. He knew that the settlers in that large territory had for a long time been looking forward for Nipissing to be made an electoral district, and he hoped some provision would be made in the Bill before the House in that direction. There was a considerable population in the district already, and its future growth would be rapid. The townships of Papineau, Mattawa, Bonfield, Calvin, Ferris, and other townships westward were thickly settled. There were also several large villages in the district, two or three of which he might refer to. Mattawa village was an important commercial centre, with a population of 700 to 800. North Bay, one of the divisions of the C. P. R., promised to be a large town, as also Sturgeon Falls, a village more westward. He said the lumbering interests of the district were very extensive, and, considering all the circumstances, Nipissing ought to be made an electoral district. He represented North Renfrew, and the C. P. R. made it convenient for the settlers of Nipissing to communicate with him. He had made some effort to attend to their wants. He would prefer that those duties would be left to some other. If the population was insufficient, perhaps some of the northern townships of Parry Sound might be attached to Nipissing. He believed that would be satisfactory to some of the Nipissing people, at least he hoped something would be done to give the residents of Nipissing an opportunity of exercising their franchise and electing some person to represent them in the Parliament of Ontario.

Mr. MEREDITH, who was greeted with cheers upon rising, said he presumed it might be taken for granted that any proper redistribution scheme, one founded upon a correct principle, should be framed so as to provide that the representation of the respective parties in the House should be in some degree proportionate to the strength of the parties in the country. With regard to the measure which the hon. gentleman was seeking to place upon the statute book, it did not answer in any respect to the primary condition he had indicated. He would show that not only did this bill not do that, but that it was deliberately designed to give greater weight to an expression of opinions from Reform electors than they were entitled to in proportion to their strength in the country. (Cheers.) He did not find fault with the addition of two members to the House, looking at the peculiar circumstances of the ridings divided, and although he was strongly of the opinion that the people did not favour an increase in the number of representatives in that House, he thought not much fault would be found with the small increase proposed. Since Confederation there had been three Redistribution bills—one in that House in 1874, one in the Dominion Parliament in 1882, and the one now submitted. In 1875 the Attorney-General was new to his political duties and fresh from the Bench, so that if the plans of 1875 were to be visited upon any day the hon. gentleman who led the Government might plead in extenuation of the guilt of that measure that the responsibility rested rather upon his colleagues than upon himself. In 1875 the excuse was made that there had been, under the B. N. A. Act, a readjustment of the representation in the House of Commons, and that in consequence there ought to be a readjustment here. There was an addition made then of six members to the House, and that occasion was made use of to give undue weight to the voice of the Reform electors in several constituencies. An attempt was made then by a readjustment of the boundaries of North Grey to shut out from that House the hon. member for North Grey (Mr. Craigton), and such a change was made as would, had the results of the previous election been a guide, have excluded that hon. gentleman from the House. (Hear, hear.) He well remembered at that time when the hon. gentleman opposite spoke of that constituency (Dufferin) created by taking territory from Wellington county and other adjacent ridings, with whatunction it was pointed out that there was a Conservative majority of upwards of 1,000 provided in that riding. But, sir, in forming that constituency the hon. gentleman put Cardwell in such a position that he hoped it would return a Reform member. He dealt in this same way with one of the Wellingtons and with one of the Simcoes, making the attempt to confine the Conservative vote in one constituency, in order to give undue weight to the Reform vote in that portion of the country.

INEQUALITIES UNTOUCHED.

He could understand that there would be some justification for this measure if hon. gentlemen were proposing to deal with all the inequalities through-

out the country. But they were not doing this, and it was a most singular thing that in almost all the cases dealt with the attempt was made to confirm hon. gentlemen on the opposite side of the House in their seats, and wipe out the small majorities of some of his supporters. (Hear, hear.) He would ask if this assertion was not borne out by the facts. The Provincial Secretary in his speech the other day indicated the constituencies with regard to which he proposed to make alterations on the ground of inequalities. He would point out the inequalities which were left untouched, and let the public say if the correction of inequalities was the leading motive which prompted the changes, and if there was no political reason for them. In Kent the East riding had a population of 25,306, and the West 20,004. Take the County of Lambton, from which the Commissioner of Crown Lands came. In the East there was a population of 23,906, and in the West riding 20,753, and yet hon. gentlemen saw no necessity for correcting this inequality. (Hear, hear.) He could explain the reason. Perhaps if the township of Enniskillen had been taken off the riding of the Commissioner of Crown Lands and added to East Lambton the result would probably have been to make East Lambton Conservative. (Hear, hear.) Then in East Northumberland there was a population of 22,229, and only 16,984 in West Northumberland. Take Perth, where there was a greater inequality between the two ridings than any other except it was the city of Toronto. North Perth had a population of 32,415, and South Perth 20,778, a difference of 12,000. These were some of the counties divided into ridings in which the disproportions were much greater than in those the hon. gentleman deals with in this bill. (Hear, hear.) Now he would ask what the result of

THE PRESENT DIVISION

of the ridings was and what the policy of hon. gentlemen opposite was with regard to this matter. They all knew how often Mr. Blake, both in and out of the House of Commons, had called attention to the present unjust system of the representation of the people. Then the hon. gentleman had pointed out the disproportion between the strength of parties in the Legislature and their strength in the country possible under the present system, and he had propounded as a remedy that in counties which can be divided into several ridings several members should be elected by the whole riding. It was strange that while that was the doctrine laid down by Mr. Blake, the hon. gentleman who leads the House, and who had been in power since 1872, had never attempted, up to the present time, to apply it for the riddance of the anomaly described by Mr. Blake. But when they came to Toronto the hon. gentleman, as a matter of justice to his leader in the House of Commons, had paid some attention to these views.

RELATIVE STRENGTH OF PARTIES.

He would like to call attention to the relative strength of parties in the country as indicated by the representation in the Chamber, and to use figures of unimpeachable accuracy. He took the figures polled at the last general election, dealing also with exceptional cases. In the three or four counties in which there were no contest she would use the vote polled in the last previous election when there was a contest, and that method was more favourable to hon. gentlemen opposite than to his side. Then where elections had since taken place in consequence of the unseating of a member he had taken the last vote. He found that the number of votes cast in favour of the Government was 135,501, and the number cast in favour of the Opposition 135,098. (Cheers.) He could challenge criticism as to the fairness of his figures. He had excluded from the calculation 3,819 votes cast for independent candidates, giving hon. gentlemen opposite, however, the benefit of all the votes cast for the independent candidate in West Toronto, in Prince Edward, and in all other cases where, although the candidates came out as independent, they had after entering the House supported the Government. It would, therefore, be seen that by the latest results parties in that Chamber were evenly balanced. Yet hon. gentlemen boasted of a majority in that House of 15, so they could not complain of the present boundaries in the constituencies.

HOW IT WORKS.

He would ask if this bill was any fair measure. Take the case of Cornwall. The proposition was to wipe it out of existence, and decrease by one the Conservative representation in this chamber. When the bill of 1875 was before the House hon. gentlemen on

this side of the House took the ground that the Government were destroying Niagara. The same reason would justify them in doing away with Cornwall. It had now a population of three thousand more than it had then, and yet at that time the Government insisted on retaining it. He could recall the arguments made on that occasion, and that at that time Cornwall was represented by a supporter of the Government. (Applause.) Yet they found that while it was right to retain Cornwall, with a population of 6,000, when represented by a Reformer, it was wrong to retain it now that it was represented by a Conservative, and contained a population of 9,000, and it must, therefore, be wiped out. (Cheers.) The next constituency was Cardwell. The Government made this to suit themselves in 1875. They cut and carved the municipalities about there in order to make it safe, and yet they failed in retaining it as a constituency on their side. It was true that by a temporary advantage during one year Dr. Robinson was returned, but uniformly the constituency had been represented by a Conservative. Finding they had no hold on the constituency, and that it was safe for the Conservatives, the Government accepted the situation and added four hundred more Conservative votes to it for the purpose of strengthening themselves unduly in other places. With regard to Elgin, the city of St. Thomas was just as much a part of West Elgin in 1875 as it was now. Why did the Government make the change now? It was because the hon. gentleman who sat behind him (Mr. Ermatinger) had wrested East Elgin from the Reformers. They are not content to take the voice of the people, but they must take out of East Elgin the city of St. Thomas, which gave a majority of 280 to the Conservative party, and place it in West Elgin, thus putting the Conservatives in East Elgin in a minority of 177 where they had a majority of 90. Essex was the next constituency he would notice. If there was any constituency the Government would leave untouched he should think it would be this. He had no desire to import acrimony into the debate, but the course taken by the member representing the South riding had been challenged, and he could not refrain from saying that it would have been more courageous if the hon. gentleman had gone back to the constituency as it was than to have had it fixed. The Government proposed where in the South riding there was a Reform majority of 30, to convert it into a majority of 132, and make it safe for themselves, by putting the township of Anderton in the North, and Tilbury West in the South. Then take the case of South Grenville, which was wiped out of existence. With the exception of the hon. Commissioner of Public Works, all the members of the Cabinet were from western constituencies, and that was the reason why the eastern section was to be deprived of the representation they had had. He might point out that Brockville had been twice arranged in order to suit the interest of the Government. What did the hon. gentlemen opposite propose with regard to North Ontario? It would be recollected that Mr. Madill carried this constituency in 1879. But last session it was carried by a majority of twenty for the hon. gentleman who now occupied the seat. North Ontario contained a population of 28,434 and South Ontario of 20,378. It was proposed to reduce the North riding by taking away certain townships to a population of 20,917 and make South Ontario contain 27,895—a very nice way of adjusting and equalizing the population. (Applause.) What was the object? It seemed that by this operation they would add 44 to the majority of the member for the North and make him feel safer in the seat which he held by such an insecure tenure. If the Government were desirous of dividing the constituency in the public interests they would have taken the township of Uxbridge and added it to the other riding, which would have given North Ontario 24,453 and South Ontario 24,459 population. (Applause.) In that way they would have equalized the population, but then they would not have been able to carry both constituencies. While pretending to equalize they had simply reversed the state of affairs, and had made South Ontario 27,895, instead of 20,378, and North Ontario 20,917, instead of 28,434. (Applause.) In the county of Leeds, the Reform strength had been rapidly passing away. It had been held sometimes by the Conservative party and sometimes by the Reform by a small majority. The present member had received a notice to quit, and no doubt at the next election it would have been represented by a Conservative. They took, however, from parts of Cardwell and increased