

No doubt, in regard to a few of the constituencies, there were some undesirable changes. The House would recollect that in his former comparison he took nine constituencies represented by three members. In the House of Commons there was one constituency represented by four members—West Middlesex. What was the result of the measure at the last Dominion election? He had pointed out that in the Provincial elections 35,777 Government supporters elected 14 members, while 34,373 Conservative voters elected only seven members. Under the Dominion bill 42,807 Conservative votes were polled and 42,928 Reform votes, a difference of 121 votes. How many Conservatives did they think were elected? Not the proportion under the bill before the House, nineteen to five, but only twelve Conservatives and sixteen Reformers. (Cheers.) He asked the fair-minded people of the province to compare these two measures. (Applause.) A good deal had been said about the so-called Gerrymander bill giving the Government at Ottawa a control in this province which they otherwise would not have had. The hon. gentleman opposite had tried to make himself believe that the Reformers were in a majority in the province. But what did Mr. Blake say on the 12th February, 1883? He said he thought the total poll of the province for the Dominion election was, on a reasonable estimate, 269,500, of which 136,300 were Conservative, and 132,200 Reform, or a difference of 3,100 in favour of the Conservatives.

Hon. Mr. FRASER—How many members did they return?

Mr. MEREDITH—They had a majority of 18.

Hon. Mr. FRASER—For 3,100 votes?

Mr. MEREDITH said the hon. gentleman had a majority of 15 for only 400 votes. (Cheers.) The Government proposed to double that majority. A proper examination would show that Mr. Blake's estimate of the Conservative vote was less than it should be. He himself made the figures: Conservative, 138,576; Reform, 133,606. That would make a Conservative majority of nearly 5,000, not taking into consideration Frontenac or South Lanark returning ministerial supporters by acclamation, or South Simcoe, where there were 1,435 independent votes cast. He would take some of these constituencies to which he had referred. In Grey, while there were 266 more votes polled for the Ministerial candidates in the three ridings, the Reformers elected two members, and the Conservatives one. In the three Hurons, though there was a plurality of 566 votes, there was only one Conservative to two Reformers elected, while for this House all three members were Reform. In the Wellingtons the total Conservative vote in the three ridings was 5,771, and only 5,757 Reform, a majority of 14 for the Conservatives, yet the Reformers elected two, and the Conservatives only one. In the ridings of York there were cast 5,031 Conservative votes and 5,011 Reform, yet two Reformers were returned, and only one Conservative. All this was under a bill framed to shackle the Reform party. (Cheers.) In the county of Huron let them see how fairly the hon. gentleman dealt with the Conservatives of that county. In the last election for that Legislature the candidates were straight party candidates. In the three ridings there were 6,017 Government votes and 5,677 Opposition. So these 6,017 elected three members, while the 5,677 elected none at all. Of course the hon. gentleman would tell him that that was the result of the peculiar conformation of the county. (Hear, hear.) Then there was the very fine constituency of Bruce, to which a third member was to be given, and in such a way as to return all three members supporters of the Government by from 250 to 300 majorities, and that the whole Conservative vote in that county should be paralyzed, if he might use the expression. How did they do that? There was a township called Brant lying on the extreme east of the constituency, and in order that the member for South Bruce might not have a Conservative vote against him that little end was carried all the way along the shore forty miles in order to capture the county of Bruce. There had been the most anxious care—he had almost said the most prayerful consideration—in order that the 3,220 unfortunate Conservatives in that constituency might have no voice in the affairs of the country. He knew that the member for North Bruce might say, Your friends at Ottawa put Port Elgin, which did not join Bruce at all, into the riding. But the original scheme did not include Port Elgin, and it was at the request of the member for North Bruce, then in the

House of Commons, that was joined to the county. The real design, to get Saugeen added, was, however, frustrated.

THE DISFRANCHISED CONSTITUENCIES.

He had a word to say with regard to the disfranchised constituencies. That portion of the province in which Leeds and Grenville were situated had been so rearranged that one of the ridings at present returning a Conservative would be wiped out of existence. The Commissioner of Public Works had taken care that he should have a safe seat in Brockville. South Grenville had given him full notice to quit, and he had to go and make a constituency in Brockville, and rumour said that even Brockville was not ready to accept him, and that the Attorney-General had to go down and appease some of the party. They also proposed to do away with Cornwall, and then in the most scientific manner to deal with Toronto. Feeling that the city had just claims upon the Government and the House for increased representation, seeing that for two members 43,000 was the factor of representation, while 21,000 was the unit throughout the country, how had hon. gentlemen dealt with Toronto? They had taken advantage of the public sentiment in favour of an additional member to deliberately steal one of the members from that city. They knew they could not divide that city in any shape by which they would have a ghost of a chance to elect a member supporting the Government. Therefore, what course did they adopt? Why, they did better from their own point of view than getting one member by means of a division into three electoral divisions. They deliberately set to work and said they would allow the majority to have two representatives, and for the minority, who are of the party of hon. gentlemen opposite, they would take one representative. By this means they neutralized the vote of Toronto, and, practically, Toronto in that House would have only one representative. (Cheers.) Hon. gentlemen justified this upon a principle that was utterly indefensible, one that both parties in England had tried and abandoned as wholly impracticable and unjust, yet they were introducing it into this province. (Hear.) He thought he had shown how transparent the intention of the Government was to deprive the Conservative party of its due strength, or why did they not also re-divide all the three riding constituencies in the province having the three seats represented by Reformers. (Cheers.) It was because the hon. gentlemen were not acting at all on the principles they affected. (Cheers.) The measure was a deliberate attempt to fix the constituencies in their own interests. He thought he had shown that this measure, instead of equalizing the representation in due proportion to the voting power, would aggravate the evil of the present inequality; that in dealing with this measure the Government had made all the changes in the interest of their party; that where the disproportion was enormous in constituencies represented by three and two members between the voting power and the population, they were not going to get rid of these differences but were increasing them; that in reference to the urban population they were making its relative strength different from what it was and making it less powerful in the province; and that under the pretence of giving minority representation they were introducing an exploded idea in order to get a representative for themselves in the city of Toronto. (Cheers.) They might talk as they pleased about the Dominion measure of 1882. Any man who carefully examined these figures and looked into their specific bearing upon this question must come to the conclusion that while the Dominion measure resulted in a few cases in some disproportions, the present system of the province gave the Government a greater proportion of members in the Assembly than they were entitled to, and that this bill would double it. He had no doubt they would insist upon it becoming law, and all he and the Opposition could do was to protest in the strongest terms possible against the tyrannical action of the majority and appeal from it to the great body of the people, who, he believed, would resent the injustice put upon the constituencies. He ventured to say that the people of this country would sustain the view of the Opposition, and that there was a sufficient sense of fair play and justice in the country to make itself felt by the Government, and to make up by the votes of the electors for the votes which the hon. gentlemen had diverted or neutralized by their measure. (Cheers.) He would take the opportunity to divide the House, although he wished it distinctly understood he did not oppose the giving the representation proposed to Algoma, Muskoka and Parry Sound. (Cheers.)

Mr. BALFOUR said the Government had not waited until the eve of a general election, as the Ottawa Government had done so as to take the Liberal party by surprise when their organization would do them no good. The Bill could not be expected, by the Opposition, to have been drawn so as to injure the prospects of the Liberal party, and it is a truly liberal Bill even to the Conservative Opposition. Considering the opportunities afforded to the Government to improve the chances of their supporters for re-election, and the example set by Dominion authorities—the bad example—the members of this House, as well as the people of the Province, cannot fail to be astonished at the moderation of the Government. Then it must be remembered that the Government had brought down the Franchise Bill, and they must consequently be somewhat in the dark as to what the constituencies would do under the proposed franchise. Population and equalization had been the guides as far as possible without unduly interfering with the municipal boundaries and relations. These were the principles Mr. Blake contended for in 1872, 1874, and 1884. Mr. Blake agreed that the principle of the division of the counties adopted was judicious, making the electoral divisions co-terminous with the counties; and that it was not well to urge the doctrine of population too far, although it should be regarded as far as possible. In 1884 Mr. Blake said—

Adopting that principle which I advocated ten years ago, I agreed then, as I agree to-day, it is from that principle the honourable gentleman has wholly departed, that electoral representation was not a mere geographical term, and that it was of the last importance, for various and most cogent reasons, that the municipal county boundaries should be respected, and that electoral districts should not be carved out of various portions of different municipal counties for the purpose, and in search of a fancied equality, not attainable accurately, not attained even approximately, either by the Act of 1872 or by the measure now before us.

This principle had been followed, and while all the principal counties had not been reconstructed for electoral purposes, yet wherever a change was made the result had been to construct real ridings of counties, and not misnomers as are the names given under the Dominion Act. Under the Dominion Act a third of the counties are composed of portions of different counties, and the principle of divisions within county boundaries, which limits the power of the majority to override the minority, had not been recognized to any extent. The present Bill considered three important principles—the extent of territory, the rapid increase of constituencies in the past, and the probable increase in the future. Sir John Macdonald had started out on the principle of equalization of the populations, and he would show how this had been observed by the Ottawa leader, Sir John also announced as another principle of his measure that of no interference with county boundaries. In The Hansard report he is reported as saying in 1882:—

Hon. gentlemen opposite do not like it, and why do they not like it? Because they think, by a fair and equal adjustment of the population of Ontario, they may lose some seats which they have to-day. . . . They do not like that the population should be arranged in constituencies nearly equal in numbers. . . . This Bill secures, in a great measure, equality. . . . I declare that this Bill is an equalization, in a very large degree, of the population. . . . We, the majority of the Ontario representatives in this House, are fighting the battle of representation by population against the indignant protests of hon. gentlemen opposite. We, sir, stand on the great principle of representation by population on the floor of this House. . . . It is a proud thing for us to say, while we are carrying out the principle of equalization of representation by population. . . . I stand on the principle that this measure is a fair one; that it is a Bill which equalizes the population.

The Mail of May 3rd, 1882, says:—

The measure was necessary in order to establish, in as fair a manner as possible, a standard of equality, and this has been done. If this injures the Grit party so much the worse for them.

And Mr. Boulton said:—

This was an arrangement to distribute the seats strictly according to population and geographical propriety.

Instead of these principles governing the Ottawa Government, however, Mr. Blake pointed out that in Quebec there were six constituencies averaging 10,207, seven others averaging 11,421, and thirteen others averaging 31,422. He pointed out discrepancies the same in other Provinces:—Three Rivers has a population of 9,296, Laval of 9,462, Napierville of 10,511. Then there were such differences as these:—

Constituency.	Population.	Difference.
Inverness, N.S.	25,651	
Victoria, N.S.	12,470	13,181
Lunenburg, N.S.	23,535	
Queen's, N.S.	10,577	18,006
Westmoreland, N.B.	37,719	
Sunbury, N.B.	6,651	31,068
Restigouche, N.B.	7,058	30,661
York, N.B.	30,397	

That showed how the principle of equalization of the population had been adhered to, and he proposed to show how the Dominion Bill provides for non-interference with municipal boundaries. There were 22 constituencies formed of two counties each:—

Present Constituency.	Formed out of
Addington	Addington and Frontenac.
Bothwell	Kent and Lambton.
Elgin, West	Elgin and Kent.
Grey, East	Grey and Dufferin.