

of the previous system. The city was not, however, now given what it was entitled to. The population of a city should be as fully represented in the Legislature as the population of other parts of the Province. On the last revised assessment roll for Toronto there were 43,000 voters registered, while in the eight electoral districts represented by the members of the Government there were only 53,000 votes. Under the new scheme the eight districts in question would have ten representatives, while the 43,000 voters of Toronto would have but four representatives. In the division of the city into four constituencies the Government had simply striven to make such a partition as would be of advantage to themselves. It would have been impossible to devise a scheme better suited to do this. Neither the present municipal divisions nor the old ward lines had been adhered to. Mr. Clarke complained also of the disproportion of population in the constituencies. South Toronto would have 15,000 voters and east Toronto 9,000. Why this disproportion, if not, as he had said, to endeavor to give the Government an advantage, and secure at least one seat for its supporters. Mr. Clarke suggested what he thought would have been better divisions for the city, and concluded by remarking that he was confident the four city constituencies would return four opponents of the Government unless the registration bill prevented the manhood suffrage voters from registering.

Hon. Mr. Gibson said Mr. Clarke's concluding observations were an answer to the rest of his speech. Certainly hon. gentlemen opposite ought to be satisfied if the arrangement of the divisions was one that enabled them to return four Conservatives. So far as observations in the press were concerned, he thought he could safely say that the arrangement of the divisions had received general consent. To show how difficult it was to find fault with the bill, he might mention that while Mr. Clarke claimed the divisions were so arranged as to secure one seat for the Government, yet The Empire, in discussing the measure, had said the Government was giving West Toronto a portion of North or South Toronto with a view to stealing West Toronto. Looking at the division of the constituencies generally, he thought it would be difficult to convince an independent and reasonable onlooker that it was not a fair one. It was thought the division as at present was better than to have them all running north and south. South Toronto, it was true, had a larger population than the other divisions, but it was in the nature of things the only division that would not be likely to grow, and that could not increase itself by annexation of surrounding territory. It might improve in a business sense, but, instead of its population increasing, it was more likely that its residents would move more and more into the outskirts in the course of the next few years. On the other hand, the other divisions were increasing rapidly in population. Mr. Gibson concluded by remarking that the Island, which had not been mentioned previously, would be connected with East Toronto.

Mr. Meredith said that the bill should have been brought in earlier in the session, so as to ensure a fuller discussion. The Government was behaving like a thief, who is in the grasp of the constable, who hands out the stolen goods, and then says, "See how honest I am!" The Government had stolen a seat in Toronto, had kept it for eight years, and were now, in fear of the country, relinquishing the stolen property. He held that the Government had not been free from gerrymander, and he instanced the dispositions made of Huron, Cornwall, Leeds, Dufferin and other counties, which, he said, showed that the Government had made unfair arrangements. He cited statistics to show that before the election of Mr. McNaughton, eighteen Liberal members represented 2,389 voters each, while six Conservatives represented 6,431 voters each. It was unfair that a Government supported by a majority in the whole country of from 3,000 to 10,000 should have two-thirds of the members of the House. This was a scandalous state of affairs, and a remedy should be found. A gentleman high in the confidence of the Government had at one time been in favor of a plan of grouping constituencies and adopting the system of cumulative voting. Whether that was a good scheme or not, something should be done to make the representation in the House of the political parties on a par with their proportion in the country. Coming to particulars, Mr. Meredith asked why it was that Hamilton, with 46,000 inhabitants, should have two members, and Ottawa, with even fewer inhabitants, should also have two, while Toronto, with 175,000 inhabitants, has but four members, or one for every 40,000. As regards Ottawa, Mr. Meredith found fault with the absence of a division of the city, and the taking in of Carleton County; these showed, he said, that the Government did so in order to get the two members for Ottawa and to lessen the Conservative majority

in Carleton. Ottawa should be divided, as was Hamilton, into electoral districts, and the existing scheme was without defence.

The Attorney-General said he did not intend discussing the whole subject at length. Mr. Meredith himself had been brief, realizing the undesirability of this. But he had made some remarks on one side, and it was proper that something should be said on the other side. As Mr. Meredith grew in years he was not becoming milder and gentler in the discharge of his duties here. Every session he used stronger language, and said more offensive things. He called the Government thieves and burglars in discussing this measure. He had got his mind in such a state that he (the Attorney-General) did not doubt but that Mr. Meredith believed all he said in the House. In that case, however, his mind must be in a most lamentable state or the hon. gentleman must need physic badly. Mr. Meredith was frequently spoken of as one who might be called on to take part in the affairs of the Dominion. He was in every respect a Conservative leader. He was tremendously indignant about the way in which the constituencies had been divided. Of course the Conservatives had always been perfectly fair in their divisions. Why, it was well known that the conduct of the Conservative Government in their division of constituencies was so absolutely appalling that numbers of their own supporters forsook them in the elections that followed, and they lost in this way much of the advantage they had expected to reap. Mr. Meredith complained that Toronto was under-represented in getting the four members proposed by the bill. How many members did the City of Toronto get in the Dominion Parliament?

Mr. Clarke objected that it was not the same constituency in the Dominion.

The Attorney-General said it was practically and substantially the same, and that this objection was mere quibbling. Toronto was as well treated in Provincial representation as in Dominion representation. The Government did not pretend to give Toronto representatives in proportion to its population. There were strong reasons against such a course by any Government in dealing with the representation of a large city with its great advantages. Such a city had far greater advantages in proportion to its population than any other section of the country. Such reasons were considered by all Governments sufficient to make some difference in determining the representation of large cities, and had been considered sufficient in the present case. Mr. Meredith complained because Ottawa is not divided in getting an increased representation. Ottawa was not divided under the Dominion arrangement by which it got two members, and it was not proposed to do so in Provincial elections. It was extraordinary to find the hon. gentleman using such strong language here over things that were done precisely as his friends at Ottawa did them. Hamilton and Ottawa were getting two members each because each of them has a larger population than any other place returning one member. The Dominion Government had given them two members each when they had a smaller population than now. The Ontario Government in its former changes of constituencies had taken care to keep within county lines, a principle that everybody approved of. If a Government or party in arranging constituencies, working in this way, found itself confronted by two arrangements, which, party considerations apart, were equally good, he did not see why the Government should not select that arrangement which appeared to be most in its favor. The Government had not done so always, but he knew of no reason why it should not have done so. The Government had not only confined itself in this way but had also conducted its operations on the principle of representation by population. He was confident that an indifferent tribunal, knowing nothing of the politics of the different sections, and looking at the character of the divisions and the numbers of the population, would pronounce it perfectly fair and impartial. As to the minority system, it was not intended that it should be a permanent arrangement. It was tried in the nature of an experiment, and if it had been found desirable to retain it for Toronto it would have been necessary to extend it to other places. As to the cumulative system, he was not sure the system might not have been applied in the present bill but for the fact that the Government had promised they would revert to the old system. But for this and some other minor reasons he was not sure they would not have adopted the cumulative system for Toronto in view of the representations made regarding it by the laboring classes. There was much to be said in favor both of the minority system of representation and the cumulative system of voting. The present bill had been favorably received. The Conservatives appeared satisfied with it. The Government might have got greater advantage out of it by cutting the city up. But they had not done this. There were no crooked lines. He ventured to say in conclusion