

act—Mr. Preston (South Brant). Respecting the Queenston Heights Park—Hon. Mr. Foy. To amend the consolidated municipal act, 1902—Mr. McDougal.

The bill of Mr. McDougal (Ottawa), which is to amend the municipal act, proposes to reduce the real property qualification in cities from \$400 to \$300.

Redistribution Proposals.

The Premier in moving the second reading of the bill respecting representation in the Legislative Assembly said that the time had come when a new scheme of representation was absolutely necessary. It did not necessarily mean that any great variation or change might be brought about in any particular number or class of constituencies. The position was very simple. They were not, as the Dominion Government were, bound by any pivotal system, but could take such steps as seemed reasonable.

In the method by which it was proposed to deal with the matter Mr. Whitney said that the Government were following the principle laid down by Sir Wilfrid Laurier in regard to the last Federal redistribution. Sir Wilfrid had, when introducing the measure, said that schedules would be referred to a special committee by whom the constituencies would be created, and no cut-and-dried scheme would be presented to the House, which it would have to swallow holus bolus. Mr. Whitney said that in this regard the Government were also following the precedent created by the Gladstone Administration in Great Britain. They could, of course, have referred the matter to a commission of Judges, who he had no doubt would have dealt with the question fairly, but he could see no reason why the Legislature should throw aside responsibility. He did not believe that the House would fail to deal with the question in a reasonable way which would give general satisfaction. At the same time he did not expect that everybody would be completely satisfied and overjoyed.

In Great Britain advice from outside sources had been obtained with regard to the delimiting of constituencies, but that it had not resulted as was desired was shown by the fact that the Government had a majority in the House of Commons of over 300, while the official returns of the votes really only entitled them to sixty.

Increase Representation.

The first result of the proposed legislation would be found to be that the number of representatives in the House would be increased from 98 to something like one hundred. The reason for the increase, he thought, would be apparent if they gave a little consideration to the matter. In several localities the population had increased rapidly. The population of Toronto had increased rapidly, and the representation would have to be increased, but at the same time he did not think that cities were entitled to the same number of representatives as a rural constituency having the same number of people.

In New Ontario a number of new constituencies would have to be created. Let the Government be as moderate as they could in increasing the membership of the House, he ventured to prophesy that within five years the new constituencies they would probably create in New Ontario would have the largest number of voters in the Province. As illustrating this Mr. Whitney said that when the constituency of East Nipissing was created the population was 25,000, and now it was 60,000. A portion of East Nipissing, which ought to be made a new constituency, had a population of 1,300 in 1901 and now had a population of 30,000.

Follow County Boundaries.

It was proposed that county boundaries should be followed as far as possible, and the basis of any action would be the equalization, as far as possible, of the population of the different ridings.

Mr. Whitney pointed out, in order to show that no undue increase of representatives was being asked for, that while the ideal in Ontario was regarded as being one member for each twenty or twenty-two thousand people, the proportion was much less in some States of the Union. In Massachusetts there were ten members of the Executive, forty members of the Senate, and 240 of the House of Representatives, while the population was 2,805,000, giving an average of 9,500 people to each representative. The population of Ontario was 2,167,000, and if they had a little over one hundred representatives the ratio in regard to the population would be one representative to considerably over 21,000 people. Vermont, Mr.

Whitney said, had 30 Senators, 250 Representatives and a population of 343,000, giving an average of about 1,200 to each member, and New Hampshire, with its population of 411,000, had 24 Senators and 333 Representatives.

Opposition Leader Criticizes.

Hon. A. G. MacKay said that he understood that in Great Britain the principles of the redistribution bill were discussed at a conference of the leaders of the parties, and the principles of the measure decided upon before it was laid before the House. In the present instance, he understood, from what the Premier had said, that a number of the schedules had already been prepared.

Premier Whitney—Oh, no! I must protest against that. What I said was that no person would think about changing counties like Dundas and Stormont, and that it would not take long to get over them, leaving the more contentious matters. I never said that any schedules were prepared.

Hon. A. G. MacKay—I was referring to the statement made before, that the hon. gentleman said the number of constituencies which were likely to be changed were decreasing.

Continuing, the leader of the Opposition said that it was not his intention to say a word of either condemnation or commendation with regard to the measure. He reserved the right of criticizing until there was something more tangible before the House. He would like to call attention, however, to clause four of the bill, which said that each electoral district should return one member except the electoral districts of North, South, East and West Toronto, which should return two members each. He did not see why one method should prevail throughout the Province except Toronto, and that in the old Conservative city a different method should be adopted. There was no hint in the clause of minority representation, and while he did not move an amendment, he hoped that the committee in their wisdom would strike out the exception.

Eight Are Too Many.

Proceeding, Mr. MacKay contended that Toronto, the seat of the Government, with four Cabinet Ministers practically living in its midst, did not need eight members. Of the 86 members Ontario sent to the Dominion House Toronto had five, and if they worked out the representation on the same lines with regard to the Legislature the city would have six members. That would be, he considered, a sufficient number. Mr. MacKay also added that if the Premier had gone to Great Britain for his illustration as to the proportion of representation to population he would have found the reverse to the condition which existed in those States of the Union he had mentioned. In the old country one member represented fifty or seventy thousand people.

The Premier said the conditions in Great Britain were different. There was only the central Parliament, and, besides, the country had an exceedingly large population.

Mr. Studholme had heard no mention of the third party being represented on the committee. He desired to know whether he would have an opportunity to discuss the bill.

Premier Whitney—Oh, yes.

Mr. Studholme—I just wanted a square deal; a little talk.

Premier Whitney—I have no knowledge of the "Independent" party ever having failed to do so. (Laughter.)

One Member Each.

Mr. Preston (Brant) expressed his appreciation of the fact that nothing definite was settled about the bill with regard to Toronto. The single-member system had been on the statute books of Great Britain since 1885, and there had not been any effort to eliminate it. He thought the principle might very well be considered.

The Premier said that the boundaries in Toronto had been made by Mr. Preston's own friends when they were in office. The Government in their modesty did not have the arrogance to change these.

Hon. Mr. MacKay—Then why change any part of the Province?

Mr. Whitney then moved that the

bill be referred to a committee composed of himself, Hons. Matheson and Hanna, and Messrs. J. R. Dargavel (Leeds), F. G. Macdiarmid (West Elgin), C. M. Bowman (North Bruce), S. Clarke (West Northumberland), and G. S. May (Ottawa).

Maintenance of Institution.

When the House went into Committee of Supply the Opposition criticisms were directed against the asylum at Hamilton. Mr. Thompson (Wentworth) asked how it was that the Hamilton Irsane Asylum needed \$55,000 for groceries, while the London Asylum, with practically the same number of people, got along with \$9,000 less. Hon. Mr. Hanna told of the better equipment in the London institution, but this did not satisfy the member from Wentworth. "Well, then, the difference is due to the inefficiency of the officers at Hamilton," added the Provincial Secretary, jokingly. Again Mr. Thompson persisted, and Hon. Mr. Hanna challenged him to point out one item that was wrong.

"There may have been something wrong in the management, but we remedied that last fall when we got a new superintendent at Hamilton," said the Minister.

Mr. D. Reed (Wentworth) called attention to the fact that teas, etc., purchased for institutions all over the Province were purchased promiscuously, but again Hon. Mr. Hanna took refuge behind a general challenge.

"These items should be bought by tender," added Mr. Reed, "and not by buying a pound here and a pound there."

Mr. Clarke (Northumberland) also took a hand in the argument, and the Premier stated that it was the same thing years ago, when Hon. Mr. Gibson had said these articles could not be purchased by tender. Mr. Clarke maintained that such a comparison was not fair, and he alleged it was "going behind the barn."

Patronage in Groceries.

Mr. Preston (Brant) instanced the Institution for the Blind at Brantford, saying that it was common knowledge that groceries were purchased month by month from grocers recommended by the defeated Conservative candidate in that city. It was true, he admitted, the same system was in vogue under the old Government, but aside from that he thought the list of articles secured by tender should, in the public interest, be enlarged. To this the Premier said "Hear, hear."

Replying to a question regarding the Hospital for Epileptics at Woodstock, the Provincial Secretary said that, though it had been originally intended to admit cases that might be cured, it had been found that chronic cases must be admitted or else the patients would have to be sent to the asylums.

Before adjournment Hon. Mr. MacKay asked about the Public Accounts Committee, and it was arranged that the committee should be organized on Tuesday next.