

LIBERALS SUBMIT MINORITY REPORT.

Redistribution Committee Has its Final Meeting.

WARM DEBATE PROMISED.

Another Gerrymander An- nounced in Essex County.

Township Which Gave 140 Majority to Liberal Candidate is Taken From Him and Added to Strong Conservative Riding — Another Change for Huron.

A minority report will be submitted to the Legislature by the Liberal members of the special redistribution committee. Messrs. Clarke (Northumberland), Bowman (Bruce) and May (Ottawa). This report, which is likely to practically be a complete bill in itself, will be a sort of formal protest against Premier Whitney's division of Provincial constituencies, much of which is characterized as nothing more or less than a gerrymander. The radical differences between the minority report and the bill will, of course, embody the ridings concerning which there has already been much criticism. The most outstanding of these are Huron, Middlesex, Toronto, Ottawa, Leeds, and Brockville, West Northumberland, West Peterboro', Peel, Cardwell, and Essex. When Hon. Mr. Matheson presents the report of the special committee the report of the Liberal members will also go in, and all will be prepared for what promises to be one of the liveliest debates of the session.

The special committee held its last meeting yesterday morning, when Premier Whitney introduced another surprise. He proposed a change in Essex which takes North Tilbury township from the South riding and places it in the North. North Tilbury gave Mr. John Auld (Liberal) a majority of 140 last election, so that the change may materially weaken him. In the North riding Hon. Dr. Reaume had a majority of over 800, and the addition of North Tilbury is not considered in Conservative circles to militate against him.

A further change has been announced in Huron, probably because of the storm of criticism which came from all quarters on account of the proposals there. Tuckersmith township has been taken from Centre Huron and placed in the South. According to Mr. Hislop (East Huron), the change does not alter matters any. From the temper of Liberal members at present it is apparent that Premier Whitney's alleged fair redistribution will be fought to a finish.

Change in Essex.

At the meeting Mr. Whitney first suggested that the Chairman make a report to the House, and that the bill go on the order paper to-day, so that it could be discussed in Committee of the Whole.

A motion was made regarding Brant, taking Burford township from the south and putting it in the north riding.

The change in Essex takes North Tilbury township from the south and puts it in the north.

Mr. Bowman pointed out that under the new arrangement the south riding would have a population of 25,000 and the north 33,000, a disparity of 8,000.

Mr. Clarke suggested three ridings in Essex.

"We will change this, which, for the purpose of making a safe political riding for the late Mr. Balfour, was stolen.

We might as well be plain about these things," said Mr. Whitney.

Back Up in Huron.

Another change was made in Huron as at first proposed, which took Tuckersmith township out of the centre riding and put it in the south.

Mr. Clarke suggested another change making equal populations, to which Mr. Whitney responded that the townships of Hullet and Goderich had been divided, and if that had not been done either Mr. Cameron or Judge Garrow would "never have set foot in this House."

"I only hope that all ridings in the Province would have as shapely an appearance as in Huron," added Mr. Whitney.

The Premier moved that Lanark remain as at present, and that no further change be made in Middlesex.

A Great Disparity.

Mr. Bowman pointed out that the changes in the north and west ridings of Middlesex made a disparity of 2,800 in population, according to the municipal census, whereas the old ridings left only a difference of 500.

The Premier said that the municipal census was often unreliable and done in a slovenly manner, therefore they had to rely on the Dominion census.

"I believe the Premier is honest, but he is liable to go wrong at times," commented Mr. Clarke.

The only change in York is that East York takes in all Stouffville, according to a motion by Mr. Whitney.

Regarding Cardwell, Mr. Bowman said Bolton village was in York county, but was still in Cardwell, and the matter was left over. Peel county still retains Albion.

The Premier's Reason.

Mr. May again raised the question of Ottawa, where the city is practically divided into Protestant and Roman Catholic ridings. The Premier responded that the division as proposed by Mr. May would surely create more religious prejudice, since a strip of one denomination would be left in the other denomination's riding.

"Why divide Ottawa at all, then?" asked Mr. May.

"The method of giving every man a bunch of votes is not the best way for him to exercise his franchise," replied Mr. Whitney.

"What about Toronto?" came the chorus from the Liberal members, but the Premier did not propose to carry the argument any further, saying he would give his reasons in the House.

"When the question comes up in the House I expect that every honorable gentleman will take his stand without hesitation, because it is right to do so. I want this House to close next Tuesday. I am going to try very hard to have it close then," said Mr. Whitney.

Entire Story of Essex.

The simple motion of Premier Whitney to change North Tilbury township from South Essex to North Essex conveys little of the real importance of the action. Last election North Tilbury contributed a Liberal majority of 140, whereas the total Liberal majority of the riding for Mr. John Auld was only 139. In fact, North Tilbury gave the second largest Liberal majority in the constituency. The effect of this township in the North riding will hardly be perceptible, according to the figures of last election, because Hon. Dr. Reaume had 836 majority there. Premier Whitney and his colleagues have been taking the Dominion census of 1901 as the basis of their changes. In 1901 North Essex had a population of 30,860 and South Essex 27,957. North Tilbury had a population in the same year of 2,192, so that now the disparity in the population will be greater than ever, and not at all in accord with the Premier's expressed intentions.

He Will Win Again.

"Let them do what they like with South Essex, we can beat them anyway," said Mr. John Auld in his most optimistic manner. "But why don't they make three ridings out of Essex when they are at it? That would be the fair thing to do. In round numbers we have a population in that county of 60,000 according to the municipal census, and it is pretty reliable. Look at the counties which have three members: Middlesex, 47,000; Wellington, 53,000; Bruce, 52,000; Huron, 55,000, and Hastings, 51,000. Some of the ridings and their population which have two members are: Norfolk, 26,000; Durham, 25,000; Elgin, 41,000; Northumberland, 32,000; Ontario, 38,000; Peterboro', 35,000, and Wentworth, 26,000. Dufferin has one member with 18,000, and Dundas one member with 17,000."

Mr. A. Hislop (East Huron) said yesterday that the new change in that

county, taking Tuckersmith township out of the Centre and putting it in the South, would not alter the situation to any great extent. Huron as divided under the new arrangement would still leave what would be considered as two Conservative ridings and one Liberal riding instead of both parties having fighting chances.

Would Not Give Up.

A rather significant story was going the rounds of the lobbies yesterday with reference to Lanark, the North riding of which is represented by Dr. Preston and the South by Hon. Mr. Matheson. It appears that Dr. Preston wanted two townships, Dalhousie and Ramsay, which gave 78 Conservative majority last election, taken from the Provincial Treasurer's riding and added to his. This would, of course, make his seat safer. Yet Hon. Mr. Matheson, with his 624 majority, would not allow the townships to go, and he was Chairman of the Redistribution Committee besides. Lanark consequently remains unaltered.

Expressions of regret at the action of Premier Whitney with regard to Brockville are being received. One letter from a Liberal in that constituency says:—

"There has not been at any time a more deliberate gerrymander in this Province than at present proposed with respect to Brockville riding. . . Apparently in retaining the rear of the townships of Yonge and Escott and the village of Athens, it is hoped that the majority in the rear of the townships will counterbalance the Liberal gain in Athens."

The letter concludes that Mr. A. E. Donovan will have much difficulty in gaining another victory.