

enquiries was unfavorable, and for that reason my colleagues decided that it would not be judicious to attempt to make the change this year. There was no refusal of a change; there was no determination expressed not to divide these counties, but simply this: that it was necessary, the Government having once made a division of the North-West Territories which was satisfactory, as far as they knew, up to ten days ago, to the people of the North-West, desired to have full information before they undertook to make another division, which might be extremely unsatisfactory to a large section of the people of the North-West. It was very natural that they should feel that there was some danger of the latter result when they saw the boundaries which my hon. friend presented to them. Hon. gentlemen will see what an extraordinary division it would be. It is not one on its face that would commend itself to the judgment of hon. members, I am sure, and it needed some very strong reason to have a division of the constituency in that particular form. We used to see, some years ago, pictures of divisions of counties which looked almost as eccentric as that, and they were a subject for jest by members on both sides of the House; but this is more eccentric I think than any we saw in those days. The Government felt that they could not accept my hon. friend's division. On the face of it, it appeared impossible for them to accept it. Then, what division could they adopt at a distance of three thousand miles in three or four days? What kind of division, supposing they decided on a division at all, would be suitable? The Government were placed in this position, that not knowing until the last moment that a re-division of the North-West was desired by anybody, the answers to the inquiries which they immediately made, with a sincere desire to meet the views of these gentlemen who thought they were not receiving a full measure of justice, were adverse to the proposal that was made. They necessarily postponed the full consideration of any re-distribution of this division until they could get authentic and full information on the spot, and it seems to me that in doing so they acted wisely. It cannot be possible that any great amount of injustice can be done to anybody in the North-West by postponing the division of

the electoral districts until the Government are fully informed as to the best mode of doing it, if it is to be done at all. That is the position of the Government now? They say: we learn by preliminary enquiry that the change would be distasteful. They say to the proposition of my hon. friend we cannot accept it as it stands; it is impossible for us to get information before Parliament prorogues, and we postpone the consideration of this subject until the next session of Parliament. It seems to me that that is a moderate, wise and proper mode of dealing with this subject, and it does not justify the loud complaints of oppression and almost threats of rebellion which we hear, because, at a moment's notice, within a few hours, we do not accept a proposal to make a radical change in the electoral districts of the North-West. I do think the way which the Government have selected is the proper way, and I feel convinced that they will be sustained by this House.

HON. MR. POWER—I think the statement of the leader of the Government is perfectly satisfactory, and I hope the hon. gentleman from St. Boniface will withdraw his amendment.

HON. MR. GIRARD—My intention certainly is not to say anything against the wisdom of the course of the hon. leader of the House; at the same time, I think I am justified in explaining the proposed division. It is due to the fact that the English and Half-breed settlements are mixed up to a certain degree, and it makes it necessary to create these boundaries, which appear to the hon. gentleman to be somewhat eccentric. I cannot withdraw the amendment; I can only assent to its being lost on a division, for very likely the same amendment will be brought before the House of Commons.

HON. MR. MASSON—I am sure my hon. friend should accept the proposition made by the hon. gentleman from Halifax. The Government have given their opinion that the division might be made. They have not promised that it shall be made, but they will consider the question, and next session they will inform us of the result. Then there is the objection made by the leader of the Government, that the division is made in an eccentric way. I can-