

June 1st, 1872

Government had brought pressure to induce them to commit a gross outrage.

Mr. STIRTON complained of the division of the County of Wellington, and believed it had been brought about by pressure at the hands of the friends of the Government. Two rural Townships were attached to a manufacturing community in a most unfair way.

Hon. Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD said he believed the House generally agreed with him that the county organization should be preserved as much as possible. He had observed this principle, and no county in Ontario had been split up.

It was intended that the Bill should not destroy any constituency now existing. If the matter were done de novo, he could not say that Niagara or Cornwall would have a member, but they were established in 1791, and on a subsequent occasion, so averse was the Government of the day (the Baldwin-Lafontaine) to extinguish them, that they attached to them the townships immediately adjoining, so as to justify their continuing to have a representative. This principle was one that obtained in England, and a constituency was seldom destroyed that had not by bribery or corruption or some other means forfeited all claim to consideration. If this principle of not sweeping away existing constituencies were acknowledged, the measure would be found a good one.

Huron and Grey were among the largest counties in Ontario, and were entitled to the members assigned them, as also were the cities of Toronto and Hamilton from the number of voters they comprised.

In England every Reform bill, from that of 1830 to that of 1865, had tended to increase the representation to the manufacturing portions of the county; so that at the present moment, of the 658 members composing the House of Commons of England, 402 represented cities and Boroughs, and only 256 represented rural constituencies; and yet the member for Durham West (**Hon. Mr. Blake**) objected to the number of manufacturing constituencies in Ontario being increased from nine to twelve.

The member for Huron North (**Mr. Whitehead**) objected to the division made of his county. That division might not be convenient to him, but it met the principle which he and the member for Durham West had both advocated; it very nearly adjusted the representation to numerical equality. The number of voters in North Huron would be 21,862, in South Huron 21,512, and in Centre Huron 22,792. The House would therefore see how nearly numerical equality was attained, and the member for Huron would find on examination that the townships in the different divisions lay side by side.

Mr. CAMERON (Huron South) asked whether Tuckersmith and Goderich were side by side.

Hon. Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD maintained that the lay of the Townships in the different divisions was continuous, and if

there was an equality of population the hon. gentleman could not charge the Government with acting against him. As to the complaints of the member for Wellington (**Mr. Stirton**), that member had a little pocket borough of his own of 14,000 while the other two divisions contained 24,000 each.

Mr. STIRTON said in 1865 the hon. gentleman proposed to make the borough still smaller.

Hon. Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD said the hon. gentleman knew well that his borough was formed by the Reform party, **Mr. Ferguson Blair** wishing to retain it in his favour for all time to come. Under the present arrangement the division of population was nearly equalized. The numbers in the three divisions would be 18,741, 21,818 and 23,432 respectively. The hon. gentlemen admitted that he was safe under the new arrangement, and also that the Liberal Party was safe throughout the country, and therefore he did not think he need complain. If the hon. gentleman admitted that he was safe and that his party was safe, it was clear out of his own mouth, that the division had not been actuated by political feeling.

Mr. CARTWRIGHT asked in what particular way the minorities of Ottawa and Hamilton were to have a chance. He believed a well-considered system of minority representation deserved all consideration. He regretted that some such system was not to be introduced.

Hon. Mr. DORION referred to the division of the city of Montreal. He did not wish to complain, as he should leave that to the members for that city; but previously the object was to give the mercantile community a vote, now nothing was to be considered but population. Under the present division there was no Montreal Centre, it would be West, and the present Montreal Centre would be a misnomer; it would be Montreal North. The present division was a mere burlesque on the speeches of the leaders of the Government on the former division. He suggested that Point St. Charles should be added to Montreal Centre, and said he was sure that neither he nor any future member for Hochelaga would be sorry to lose the Grand Trunk votes, which were always given in the way directed by their superiors, while the member for Montreal Centre might be glad to obtain those votes. He suggested a new naming of the divisions, and said the present plan was an entire contradiction to the principle previously advocated.

Mr. BOLTON regretted that the Government had not attempted to remove some anomalies in New Brunswick. In the House there was one member representing five thousand, and others thirty thousand. If the matter was not dealt with now it would stand for five years.

Mr. MAGILL did not think it possible that any such scheme could give universal satisfaction, but he maintained the present scheme could not fail to be considered fair and just in every way. He was pleased to find that it gave proper consideration to the manufacturing interests, which had not hitherto been the case. One member for Hamilton was entirely inadequate; for the population of that city was larger than almost any constituency in Ontario. He was