

of the truth compelled it manfully to administer this scathing rebuke to those of hon. gentlemen opposite who are perpetually belittling the country which is the birth-place of many of us and the land we are all proud to be associated with. Sir, we are sometimes told that the National Policy has developed the country, has kept our people from leaving us, and has built up in our midst industries that have been of advantage to our people.

There is just one thing to which I wish to draw the attention of the House before I conclude, and which I think does not quite correspond with this statement. I refer to the redistributions that have taken place in my own province of Ontario and throughout the Dominion generally. You will remember, Sir, that after the census of 1881, when there was a Redistribution Act passed in 1882, Ontario had so far advanced in population and development that she was entitled to four additional members. Manitoba had also grown in the short period between that and the time she was constituted a separate province, and had one member added to her representation, and the confederacy was entitled, by increase of population, to five additional representatives in the House of Commons. Ten years of the National Policy passed over the country. We took the census of 1891, and we came to the redistribution of 1892, and what did we find? We found that in the premier province of Ontario our population had not gained at all, but had simply kept step with that of the province of Quebec, which is the standard province of confederation, and that if we had not gone back, at any rate we had not gained. This showed conclusively that Ontario had not retained her natural increase of population during the ten years of the National Policy, from 1881 to 1891. What was the case in the other provinces? Manitoba had gained two members, showing that notwithstanding the wealth that we had freely poured out, and the temptations we had held to Europeans to come and settle on the broad prairies of the North-west, Manitoba was only able in ten years to gain two additional representatives, whereas in five years, under the old regime, she had gained one. How was it with the maritime provinces? Nova Scotia was not able to retain her population, and her contingent will come back after the next election one member less. New Brunswick will have two members less, and the tight little Island of Prince Edward—the little gem that lies out in the gulf by itself, and there is no finer agricultural country on the continent—will have to content itself with a reduction of one member. This shows that in the aggregate the eastern provinces by the sea have lost population, since they are not able to retain the number of members they formerly had. British Columbia was entitled to no increase.

As regards the province of Ontario what are the facts? Hon. gentlemen opposite boast of the building up of our population by the National Policy, and point with pride to the growth of some of the larger cities. But, Sir, Toronto has grown at the expense of the smaller towns and villages, within forty miles of it, and the only part of Ontario where the population has increased is the new district of Algoma, and there the increase is due to the development of its mining industry. What was then the action taken by the Government. They were in the position that they had to redistribute some of the constituencies in order to equalize the representation, whereas if the National Policy had done all they promised it would, instead of diminishing they would have required to increase the representation. Not only would the older constituencies have retained their representation, but they would have increased it. Two of the older constituencies, however, in the Niagara peninsula, had to be blotted out, and their record, dating back to the early history of the province disappears. By the action the Government took they might just as well have passed an act declaring that the part of my constituency attached to North Brant should not vote at all. For what reason? It is the constituency to which they are attached, candidates of the party opposite, during the last two general elections, lost in both cases their deposit; and for fear the Liberal element of that constituency should not continue to do that sort of thing, we find the Government adding to it a section of another riding, which gave 350 of a Liberal majority at the last general election. They did this to enable the electors to still make sure that any candidate of hon. gentlemen opposite who would have the temerity to again test that constituency, would again lose his deposit. They might just as well have passed an act declaring that Conservatives and Liberals alike added from North Wentworth should be deprived of the right to vote because they were put where their votes could not be successfully used.

But, Mr. Speaker, you may change the outlines of a constituency, you may readjust your boundaries, but you cannot control the free and independent electors who reside within those boundaries. The population of Ontario, be they Conservatives or Liberals, have at least minds of their own; and I shall be very much mistaken if the Government do not find that their policy has done nothing to strengthen them in the estimation of the best thinking men of the Niagara peninsula. You may change these boundaries and adjust these schemes, but the experience of hon. gentlemen opposite in 1882 indicates that the people are free in their choice and will suit themselves when the time comes.