

merit your good opinion, by close attention to my public duties and by an unvarying adherence to what I thought best in the public interest. In 1872 the support which had been given by all parties to the principle of forming every constituency within the limit of some city or county was adhered to. It was regarded by the leaders of the government and of the opposition alike as a course demanded in the public interests, as it would prevent the improper union of parts of different counties in one constituency, and so prevent all attempts to legislate an unpopular party into power. But after the

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had been taken, the leaders of the Conservative party threw aside the understanding had in 1872, upon which both parties then relied, as much so as if it had been an integral part of our federal constitution. The government, at that time, in revising the representation so as to give each province the number of members to which it was entitled, in a large measure treated the Province of Ontario as a unit in which county boundaries were disregarded, and in respect to which they were free, so far as they could be, to give the Reform constituencies, and in this way secure to the supporters of the administration a majority in the Commons. I need only refer to the County of Middlesex by way of illustration, in which, in the election of 1891, the Reform candidates polled in the aggregate a majority of 1,100, but in which their opponents elected three of its four representatives. This proceeding was not abandoned during the eighteen years that the Conservative party had control of the government; but in each successive revision the wrong was further intensified by making further changes to improve the advantages already acquired. Upon our success in the general election of 1896 we resolved to correct, if possible, this gross wrong without unnecessary delay. We accordingly endeavored at two successive sessions to remedy the mischief, but without success. Indeed, we proposed to transfer the work of

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to judges of eminence, not because we questioned the competency of parliament, but because we hoped to disabuse the minds of our opponents of the notion that we desired, by any improper division, to secure a party advantage. We hoped thereby to obtain the support of the Senate to a measure relating to the proper constitution of the House of Commons