

expected that I should enter, in any degree, into the details of the proposed readjustment; but I wish to make some general observations with regard to the measure, so far as I have been able to apprehend it. Sir, this measure has been brought down too late and too early. It has been brought down too late, because a measure of this description, which affects very deeply the political interests, feelings, wishes, and opinions of a large portion of the constituencies of Canada, ought to have been brought down at an early period of the Session, when there would have been ample opportunity for its details to be mastered, not merely by us here, but also by those for whom we are legislating. So far as the public basis of the Bill goes, it is based upon information which was in the possession of the Administration as long ago as before last midsummer. The Census returns were published about midsummer, and they were in the hands of the Administration and available to them for a considerable time before their publication; there was, therefore, so far as the public basis of a Bill to alter the representation is concerned, all that period for its preparation. But although its necessity was known, although it was announced in the Speech from the Throne, although it was repeatedly asked for, it is not brought down until the eleventh or twelfth week of the Session, when the hon. gentleman has upon the paper a notice to take Saturday; when we are wearied with our work and all anxious to go away; when, although the hon. gentleman says there will be time for discussion, he knows perfectly well there will not be time for discussion; when there will not be time for that communication with the people to which I have referred, and for their responses to come—I say it is not until this hour that this measure is brought down. It is brought down too soon, for the reason that such a measure as this ought never to be brought down at all. We know the name of a politician which has become historical in connection with the use—the profligate and outrageous use of political powers in the interests of a particular party in the neighboring Republic, to alter constituencies; and I venture to say that this Bill will associate the hon. gentleman's name for all time to come with a similar practice. Sir, what are the principles of the hon. gentleman in reference to readjustment? So far as I gather from his statement, there are over fifty changes proposed to be made in the Province of Ontario. Over fifty constituencies are to have their boundaries changed by this measure. The political map of the Province of Ontario is to be entirely reconstructed. What is the excuse? The excuse is that four seats had to be added to the Province of Ontario. What is the justification beyond that? That the hon. gentleman's nice notions of justice and equality to the different parts of the population are offended by certain discrepancies in the numerical proportions of the different constituencies, and he is obliged, by that strong sense of justice which animates him, to see that these are removed in consequence of the addition of those four members. What is he doing in order to accomplish this? Disregarding, so far as those statements we have can give us information at this moment, wholly the principle which he himself stated should govern us in making the changes ten years ago, when a similar duty devolved upon him—the principle, in respect of which his views were assented to on that occasion by this side of the House, of having regard to the municipal boundaries and divisions, a proper consideration of which should guide him in regulating the constituencies. He is wholly disregarding that principle now. He is detaching townships from their counties and adding them to other counties, and making his divisions under the pretence—and I repeat the word pretence—of equalizing the population, but with the real result of doing what he threatened he would do to an hon. friend of mine not now in the House, hiving the Grits. Hon. gentlemen may laugh at it, but if they had the

spirit and honor of men they would repudiate it. They laugh at it as a good joke that the majority in this House should legislate themselves into power. They laugh at it as a good joke that they should take advantage of their power and majority to do what I have stated is the ruling principle of the right hon. gentleman, so far as he can accomplish it—to collect together a number of townships where the Reformers happened to be in a strong majority, and detach them from the adjoining counties, and so to weaken the strength of the Liberal party in a large number of constituencies, giving them in return an occasional constituency. That is the main feature of this measure so far as redistribution is concerned. Let us consider how far this affects the natural municipal boundaries of the counties, and how far this business of equalization is really the honest intention of this measure, or ought to be adopted by this House. I will deal first of all with the question of detaching the townships from the counties, and making in effect electoral districts, which, although the hon. gentleman calls them ridings of counties, are not, in a great many cases, ridings at all. The name is nothing; it is the substance we look at. In many cases he takes a township from one county and adds it to another and calls it the north, east or west riding of this, that or the other; but it is no longer a portion of the original county, a segment of that organization—it is something added to another county for political purposes—for the purpose of strengthening the Government and weakening their opponents. I wish to read what the hon. gentleman thought on this subject ten years ago, when he had a similar duty to discharge:

“With respect to the rural constituencies, the desire of the Government has been to preserve the representations for counties, and subdivision of counties as much as possible. It is considered objectionable to make representation a mere geographical term. (Hear, hear). It is desired as much as possible to keep the representation within the county, so that each county that is a municipality of Ontario should be represented, and if it becomes large enough, divide it into ridings—that principle is carried out in the suggestions I am about to make. That rule was broken in 1867 in three constituencies, viz.: Bothwell, Cardwell, Monck; and I do not think on the whole that the experiment has proved a successful one. I do not think it was unsuccessful as far as the representatives of those new constituencies themselves were concerned, as they are well and ably represented by the gentlemen who now hold seats for the constituencies; and I hope that if am returned again to the next Parliament I shall meet those hon. members. But it is obvious that there is a great advantage in having counties elect men whom they know. Our municipal system gives an admirable opportunity to constituencies to select men for their deserts. We all know the process which happily goes on in Western Ontario. A young man in a county commences his public life by being elected by the neighbors who know him to the Township Council. If he shows himself possessed of administrative ability, he is made a Reeve or Deputy Reeve of his county. He becomes a member of the County Council, and as his experience increases, and his character and abilities become known, he is selected by his people as their representative in Parliament. It is, I think, a grand system that the people of Canada should have the opportunity of choosing for political promotion the men in whom they have most confidence and of whose abilities they are fully assured. All that great advantage is lost by cutting off a portion of two separate counties and adding them together for electoral purposes only. Those portions so cut off have no common interest; they do not meet together, and they have no common feeling except that once in five years they go to the polls in their own township to vote for a man who may be known in one section and not in the other. This tends towards the introduction and development to the American system of caucuses, by which wirepullers take adventurers for their political ability only and not for any personal respect for them. So that as much as possible, from any point of view, it is advisable that counties should refuse men whom they do not know, and when the representation is increased it should be by subdividing the counties into ridings.”

Then he went on to point out that he had acted on that principle:

“I omitted to state that it is not intended to divide either Ottawa or Hamilton. Although we have adopted in Old Canada the principle of electoral divisions, it has not been considered in England a proper mode of representation, inasmuch as it totally excludes minorities, and in some constituencies in England they have introduced the system we now propose for the purpose of protecting minorities. It is therefore proposed that Hamilton shall return two members.”

Then replying to the hon. gentleman, I said:

“He did not intend to discuss the details, but agreed that the principle of the division of the counties adopted was judicious, making the elec-