

was a difference in population: one had 27,000 and the other 34,000, speaking roughly. That was the position of the outlying counties. Three members had to be returned in these two counties, and it was impossible that it could be done by following county boundaries without a manifest unfairness as far as the distribution was concerned. In the distribution of 1892, our province was divided into five ridings, beginning at one end and cutting it into five almost equal ridings. There is not a difference of 2,000 in the population of the ridings, every one of these ridings was a close battle ground between the parties at the general election of 1896, there was no large majority to spare in any of them; 300 odd was the largest majority in any of these large constituencies, having a voting strength of over 5,000 each, and that showed most conclusively that the redistribution was made on the fairest possible lines, because every one of the five constituencies became a hard and hot battle ground between both political parties. If my hon. friend has given us a correct interpretation of his bill—and we are bound to accept his statement—county boundaries is to be the prevailing consideration, and you will have to break up the present fair distribution in Prince Edward Island, and give one of those outlying counties one member while the other will have two, in place of dividing on the fair lines contemplated by the British North America Act. It is quite true, as my hon. friend has said, that the British North America Act does not provide as an enactment that the principle of representation by population shall prevail as between the different constituencies within a province. My hon. friend was quite right when he said that. It provides that the principle of representation by population should prevail as between the different provinces. The conference that brought about confederation was interested in working the problem as between the different provinces, leaving to the Parliament of Canada and the representatives in parliament of the different provinces to provide for an even and fair distribution of parliamentary seats within each province. But although it may not be stipulated in the British North America Act, the very fact that representation by population was provided as between the provinces, even although it was not made to extend by any enactment whatever to the constituencies

that were in the country, clearly indicated that it ought to govern and was expected to govern with regard to the different constituencies in the country, and I have no hesitation in saying, from what I know of some of the other provinces, the neighbouring province of New Brunswick for instance, that it is impossible that they can maintain county boundaries and recognize that principle. I know they have been maintained up to the present time, but I know very well it is not right, and some time or another justice will have to be done. Take the county of Albert with a population of 7,000, a little agricultural county without population of any consequence; then the adjoining county of Westmorland, containing several towns and a population of 40,000. The county of Albert has a member in the House of Commons as well as Westmorland, and under the proposed system that would be absolutely perpetuated, because there are counties enough in New Brunswick to absorb the representation, without giving any one county except St. John two members: and therefore the little county of Albert would have to continue under this principle with one member, and the great county of Westmorland will increase much faster with its railway facilities than the other county, and even now it has six times the population of Albert, yet it can have only one member as against one member in the smaller county. Under this principle which has been announced by the leader of the House, you will still have to acknowledge county boundaries, and the most insignificant county may have as full representation as the largest county. The principle announced is not a sound one, and it is not one that will stand 20th century discussion at all, and I am sure before the bill is passed that hon. gentlemen will think that it is not a very good principle to ask parliament to agree to.

Hon. Mr. BOULTON—I cannot allow the debate on the Address to close without expressing my views upon the various questions that are brought down. I must first unite with others in extending a welcome to the Earl of Minto, who has been appointed as successor to Lord Aberdeen in the distinguished office of Governor General of Canada, a position that is becoming more and more important every year, calling for the appointment of such men as Lord Minto