

increase pertains to one end of the country or the other; there is a certain right to which the people under the constitution, are entitled and these hon. gentlemen dare deny them that right!

Mr. CROTHERS: What representation did the hon. gentleman's party give to the increased population shown by the census of 1901 at the next general election in 1904?

Mr. OLIVER: I cannot answer that question, and I do not think it has any bearing on the case.

Mr. CROTHERS: It is a perfectly parallel case.

Mr. OLIVER: I am not acquainted with the facts, but I would risk the suggestion that it is not a parallel case. What the late Government did in this connection is not a point for argument.

Mr. GERMAN: The census returns were not completed until December, 1902. Redistribution was effected in 1903, and an election held in 1904.

Mr. CROTHERS: I may tell the hon. member for Welland that the report of the census for 1901 first appeared on August 15 of that year, and the Redistribution Bill was not passed until October 24, 1903.

Mr. GERMAN: The census report was not completed until December—

Mr. CROTHERS: I was speaking of the preliminary report which appeared on August 15, 1901.

Mr. GERMAN: That was not a complete report of the census.

Mr. OLIVER: My hon. friend will surely admit that the preliminary report would not be the basis of action by Parliament.

Mr. CROTHERS: Certainly it would, as far as population is concerned.

Mr. OLIVER: I think my hon. friend will agree that it would not, because the preliminary report is not always accurate, and a proper exercise of the constitutional right depends on accuracy. Unless the country is assured that the report is absolutely correct, Parliament certainly is not justified in acting upon it.

Mr. CROTHERS: Hon. gentlemen opposite did not give redistribution for two years after December, 1901.

Mr. GRAHAM: It was effected the first session of Parliament after the census was completed.

Mr. OLIVER: The statement of my hon. friend is not material to my point; what the late Government did has nothing whatever to do with the responsibilities

Mr. OLIVER.

of this Government, so long as those responsibilities are defined in the constitution. Let me make the suggestion that there was not at that time a question of major importance, relating to the most vital interests of the Empire, pending the consideration of the people of Canada, as is the case in the present instance. I do not recall the details of the circumstances referred to by the hon. minister, but the hon. member for Welland (Mr. German) has, I think, stated them correctly and fairly, and that is a sufficient answer to my hon. friend.

Mr. CROTHERS: Was not the question of the construction of the National Transcontinental railway pending at that time?

Mr. OLIVER: Surely my hon. friend will agree that that is a different matter from a question which so vitally concerns the interests of the Empire, and which involves the voting of \$35,000,000 out of the control of this Parliament?

Mr. CROTHERS: The other question involved \$200,000,000.

Mr. OLIVER: Does my hon. friend suggest that we have not received value for the money spent on the National Transcontinental railway?

Mr. CROTHERS: That is not relevant at all.

Mr. OLIVER: That is what I think; it is not relevant.

We are dealing to-day with a question involving \$35,000,000, concerning the most vital interests of Canada and the Empire, and in a Parliament that is thirteen members short of the strength which the constitution of Canada states it should have, and in which the representation of one part of the country is twenty-two members short of the number to which the people are entitled by the constitution. It is a notorious fact that in that part of the country which is now entitled to an increase of representation, the increase of population has been proportionately greater in the years which have elapsed since the census was taken than in the years immediately preceding. This Government is, therefore, inflicting a direct injustice upon the people of western Canada in the blank refusal which the Prime Minister threw across the floor of the House early in the session—denying a moral as well as legal right. But I do not rest my case on that. I am not here to make a special plea on behalf of the people of western Canada; I am here simply to contend that this Government is disregarding the letter and the spirit of the constitution, at a time when, above all others, the occasion demands that the constitution should be