

government it would be a gerrymander; but the same measure, or one of the same character, if submitted to parliament by the Liberal administration, is a great effort of statesmanship and must not be called a gerrymander; it is a redistribution of seats. That is, I think, about the extent of the uneasiness of the hon. gentlemen. My hon. friend the leader of the House only indicated one point of the proposed bill, and that was that county boundaries should not be interfered with. He went on and drew upon views expressed by Sir John Macdonald in 1872, that it was not desirable to break up existing relationships in any geographical tract of a country known hitherto, it may be, as a county: that the people become associated in municipal, agricultural and educational affairs, and a great many other things; and that the breaking up of these relations was undesirable, and the hon. gentleman amplified how it was undesirable, and I agree with a good deal of what he said. There is no question there is a great deal of force and truth in that, but my hon. friend went on to say that the present bill was intended to be a repeal of the gerrymander. I suppose he meant the redistribution of 1882 in the province of Ontario. He seemed to forget that he was urging an argument, and a very strong argument, against the bill. If the bill were passed on the line that is now indicated, that would throw back the constituencies of Ontario to the boundaries which existed in 1881, before the passage of the Act in 1882. If he were to do that it would be twenty years from the time of that change until the new change would be brought about, and all these conditions that the hon. gentleman has described have grown up within those boundaries since that time almost as strongly as they had in the old county boundaries before the redistribution of 1882, and there will be just as much disturbance in breaking up the boundaries that were established at that time. Twenty years is a great deal in the life of a county or constituency. Changes have taken place, other institutions have been moulded, to conform with the division that was made in 1882, and any Act you pass that will deal in a very severe manner with existing boundaries will have all the evils attached to it that attached to the original Act, whether it was good or bad.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—They are only attached for electoral purposes.

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—My hon. friend is ignoring altogether the argument of the hon. gentleman beside him.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—Not at all.

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—He said that within political boundary would grow affiliations of another character, municipal and educational and so on. Men would come together and work together, and the breaking up of these associations and the change of these boundaries would disturb the affiliations. There will be a severe disturbance if the hon. gentlemen make radical changes now. I am not going to defend the Redistribution Act of 1882. I know nothing about it. I have heard it condemned by Liberals and in the Liberal press, and have heard equally strong condemnations of the gerrymander by the government of Sir Oliver Mowat in Ontario. I have been told that as far as the redistribution in Ontario for provincial purposes is concerned, they did not even hesitate to cut townships in two to carry out their objects, and there never was known to be a township cut in two by Sir John Macdonald. I am not discussing the question whether one party was worse than another: very likely there have been wrongs done on both sides, but I have no hesitation in saying that the argument addressed by my hon. friend to this house that the disturbing of boundaries which had existed for a long time and in connection with which affiliations of different characters have been formed, is attended with very great evils, and that the very argument he has used as against the original disturbance will apply with equal force against a new disturbance at the present moment, and I will go further and say that the principle laid down by the hon. gentleman that county boundaries must be adhered to is not a sound principle. I know our own position in the province of Prince Edward Island. We under the last census lost one of our members, and had only five members to return. Previously we returned two members for each of our three counties, but under the census of 1891 we lost one member. Our metropolitan county is just entitled to two members out of the five, and in the outlying counties there