

that has had leanings towards one political party. Perhaps ever since confederation that constituency has voted for one political party. What happens? Those of the minority having long ago given up any idea of obtaining any share whatever in the representation, of having any hope whatever of ever obtaining a voice in parliament, have ceased practically to take any interest whatever in the election of members. They cease to study the great questions of the day; they know that the election within the limits of their small constituency is a foregone conclusion, and they give up all hope of ever having a word to say in the administration of the affairs of the country. It has been urged I know as an answer to the undoubted evil presented by such constituencies that those who are in a minority in those constituencies have their opinions voiced and are in reality represented by members belonging to their party who are in other constituencies. That is an argument that should have no weight whatever with any reasonable man who knows anything of politics, because it would be idle to pretend that the aspirations, the feelings, the wants, the ideals of an electorate in one constituency can properly find expression in parliament through a member who has never seen the electors of that county, who knows nothing of them and has no mandate whatever to represent them. It would be absurd to suppose that a minority in a constituency, say in Ontario or even in some parts of Quebec which has voted Liberal since confederation, would be properly represented in this House by a member from some other constituency in some other province or even in the same province who happened to represent a constituency which voted exactly the other way. That contention has been sometimes urged, but I find that all writers of any experience and repute who have treated the subject consider it as absolutely unfounded. We have had the experience of what I might call, in a sense, the larger constituency, within the limits of my own province.

We have under our provincial representation the constituency of Hochelaga that surrounds the city of Montreal. It has grown during the past few years to quite enormous proportions. It is an extremely extensive constituency—I speak in reference to its provincial representation, because generally it has long ago been changed—the number of the electors approximating 40,000. You have there as a rule two candidates, and that constituency, which I understand is about to be sub-divided, has illustrated the argument which I am urging for larger constituencies. You have candidates who are well known, who enjoy a wide reputation, and it is impossible to resort to the methods of corruption, the political vices and tricks and the dominating influence of small politics. That is the ex-

perience which in a limited degree has appeared to prove some of the assertions which I have been making in regard to the advantage of large constituencies. In our own country, where the system of patronage prevails, or has prevailed, to what I think everybody will admit has been an odious degree, the objection to the smaller electoral district becomes still greater; because, for instance, in a very large constituency, say of the size of the entire island of Montreal, it would be impossible to resort to the promise of a great many small public works, which by the admission of everybody are not at present advantageous, when we have such immense problems to solve in connection, for instance, with the problem of transportation. Nobody in a grouped constituency within the limits I have just indicated, could advocate the construction of a small wharf or a small public building, but would be obliged to consider the relation of such a large territory as the island and city of Montreal to the all-important question of transportation. He would be obliged to lay before the electors, not promises of small and very often useless, though comparatively costly improvements, but the necessity of carrying out such a plan of transportation as was laid before the country and the government some years ago by a commission composed of very experienced men, who after considerable labour had in my opinion solved that very vital question in every part of the country. I have therefore endeavored to show that under present conditions you have not in parliament a faithful mirror of the feelings and opinions of the electorate, as it were a microcosm of the electorate, but as a rule exactly the opposite. You find, in many cases, in every country where the single-member constituency exists in actual operation, the government of the people by a minority of the electors; and in almost every case, even in England, where we are accustomed to look for what is right and proper and well calculated in electoral matters, an utter disproportion between the representation in parliament and the vote of the electors.

It goes without saying that the question I have treated, in a very limited and general way, has engaged the attention, in every country enjoying representative institutions, of most of the public men, and has resulted in the production of numerous works, by very competent publicists and writers, in every country in Europe; and I think most of these books have been written within the last twenty years. The question of reform is at the present moment the actual burning question in England. The question is, what kind of remedy can be applied to such a regrettable state of affairs? Of course, you cannot expect to find people who have thought of the subject to be of the same opinion. I wish to