

June 1st, 1872

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Saturday, June 1st, 1872

The House opened at 1.40 having been sitting with closed doors.

Prayers

MISTAKE IN VOTING

Mr. GRANT called attention to the vote given by him in error last night on Hon. Mr. Blake's amendment to the Pacific Railway Bill, and, with the permission of the House, desired to have that vote changed.

Hon. Mr. BLAKE thought the proper course was to have an entry made in the Journal that such an application had been made. That course had been adopted on a previous occasion.

Hon. Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD thought this was the proper course, in which **The SPEAKER** concurred.

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THE REPRESENTATION BILL

Hon. Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD then introduced the bill to re-adjust the representation and said:—I rise to introduce the bill to re-adjust the representation at the House of Commons pursuant to the provisions of the British North America Act, and in consequence of the results of the census taken in 1871.

As it is known, the Union Act provides that there shall be a re-adjustment of the representation in this House on the completion of every decennial census, according to a scale therein fixed. Thus, supposing Lower Canada should, with its population, have sixty-five members; then a proportionate increase or decrease is to be meted out to the other Provinces according to the plan and scale laid down in that Act.

Under the census as taken it appears that Ontario, if Quebec keeps, as is contemplated, its original number of sixty-five members, will have a right to an addition of six members; Nova Scotia of two, and New Brunswick of one; the Provinces of Manitoba and British Columbia remaining as fixed by the arrangements made at the time of their coming into the Union until the next decennial census of 1881. The Union Act provides that there is to be a re-adjustment of the representation of the completion of each decennial census. The House will therefore for the next ten years be composed of two hundred members—eighty-eight from Ontario, sixty-five from Quebec, twenty-one from Nova

Scotia, sixteen from New Brunswick, four from Manitoba, and six from British Columbia.

In determining the mode of distributing the new seats, the Government took into consideration the principles which have guided the establishment of the elective system in the Provinces ever since they have been Provinces; and it will be found that, in them all, while the principle of population was considered to a very great extent, other considerations were also held to have weight; so that different interests, classes and localities should be fairly represented, that the principle of numbers should not be the only one. This was established in 1791 with respect to the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, where there were certain proportions of rural constituencies established, and a certain number of counties, so that the agricultural population might be represented and also the manufacturing and commercial and town populations. In 1841 when the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada were re-united, the same principle was carried out, and on the increase of members to 130 which took place during the time that the Provinces were united, each Province having sixty-five members, Ontario was provided with fifty-six representatives of Counties and Ridings, and nine representatives of Cities and Boroughs. In 1867, when the number of representatives in the House of Commons was increased from sixty-five to eighty-two, the increase was given altogether to the rural constituencies.

It is proposed in the present readjustment to pay regard in the distribution to manufacturing as well as agricultural interests, and therefore of those which will be added to Ontario it is proposed to divide them equally, three to agricultural constituencies and three to city constituencies. It is proposed to give Toronto three members instead of two, and Hamilton and Ottawa each one additional. Toronto has a population of 56,092, so that, on every principle of population, considering as well its great increase in manufacturing and commercial interests, Toronto has in every way a claim to increased representation. Hamilton also is a large and rising city, and is more peculiarly, perhaps, even than Toronto, the seat of the manufacturing interests in the west. The population of Hamilton is 26,716, which would give 13,358 for each member being more than the average of counties in Eastern Canada.

Ottawa is not quite so large, the population being 21,545, and it might well have been postponed if it were not for two considerations: first, the manufacturing interest and the increasing size of the town; and in the second place a consideration of locality. The Ottawa section of country, with the single exception of this one addition to its representation, remains as it was; all the other members are given to Toronto and places north and west of Toronto, so