that character we shall be led into all sorts of conjectures. However, putting aside that consideration for the moment and accepting the estimate which has been made by the Minister of the Interior, for the purpose of argument, although believing it to be an estimate which is not supported, we have the result which I pointed out to the right hon. gentleman, and I must confess that I think the situation is one which demands grave consideration at his hands. I have not heard and I cannot conceive of any reasons which would enable one to say that a distribution of that kind has even the most remote semblance of fairness—245,000 people to elect 23 representatives; 5,000 to elect 2. The Minister of the Interior has referred to the development of industries. Surely no one who knows anything of the province of Alberta will suggest that there is any greater wealth, or any more industries in this district than in other districts. I am not suggesting that these things should be very much taken into consideration, but they were suggested this afternoon by the Minister of the Interior in his remarks. The basis of population must be the ultimate basis upon which to proceed, having regard, of course to certain other conditions to which we are willing to give weight if necessary. He speaks of community of interest. Even assuming that the district referred to has a community of interest distinct from the remainder of the province of Alberta we are not in any way seeking to invade the principle which he invokes because our only suggestion is that this particular district in Alberta shall be entitled to one member, although, according to the information as to the population of the province that is before us it has only one-half of the population which would entitle it to a member—25 members to be elected to the legislative assembly by 250,000 people; an average of 10,000. The government suggest that 5,000 people in this district shall have two members. We suggest one member, which is just double the representation which the population of that district would be entitled to under the estimate which has been presented to this House by the government. Under these conditions, how is it possible to ask the committee to give two members to that district instead of one. I trust the right hon. gentleman will adopt what has been suggested by us, and modify the schedule accordingly.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. We are now in the fourth day of this debate, and after giving as fair and impartial consideration as I could to the matter, the conclusion at which I have arrived is that the only point as to which anything like an argument has been made by gentlemen opposite is as to whether the district of Athabaska should be represented by one member or by two. I do not pretend that I am free from bias and I suppose if I did I would not be believed; all of us are perhaps more or less based on one side or the other, but I hold that that would not prevent us from giving a fair and impartial judgment in a matter of this kind. I have heard the word gerrymander applied to this distribution, but in the sense of grouping sections of the population or scattering naturally united districts with a view of giving an unfair advantage to one political party, I am glad to say that after four days discussion that has not even been suggested. Unfortunately a quarrel has arisen out of the fact that there are two rival cities in the new province of Alberta and I take it that this extraneous circumstance has led to the discussion on this distribution. Unless I am greatly mistaken, and I am in the judgment of those who have listened to the debate, if we had only Calgary and no Edmonton or Edmonton and no Calgary, no man in this House would grudge giving two members to the district of Athabaska. This House has never refused representation to constituencies which were much smaller than others, when these constituencies were separated by distance, when they were new communities, or when they had local interests to be served. I was impressed this afternoon with the reference to the representation of Quebec West, which of course I knew but which did not occur to me until it was mentioned. Quebec West has a population of about 9,000, but it has its member, and we never thought of merging it into another constituency simply because we wanted to give representation to a class of the population which might otherwise not be represented in this parliament. In other provinces there has also existed a great discrepancy between the population of constituencies, but the smaller communities have been left their representation although not entitled to a representative in point of number, because it is felt it would not be wise to leave particular interests or classes unrepresented. I have already called the attention of the House to the fact that in 1871 Cariboo in British Columbia had a total population of 1,955, the number of voters being 359, and these 359 men in the district of Cariboo had the same voting power as some 20,000 men in other constituencies of the Dominion. In the constituencies of Yale the population was actually only 1,316, and the total number of voters 148. In the election of 1874, Mr. Dewdney was returned having secured 75 votes and his opponent got 9 votes, making 84 votes cast in that election. I could cite a number of similar instances in Manitoba, British Columbia and elsewhere. Why were these discrepancies allowed? Nobody ever objected, nobody ever suggested these communities should not be represented; it was felt that as there were groups of populations scattered here and there, it was better for the contentment of the people at large and for the better government of the country that they should have a voice in the legis-