

ture of this money. After making that statement, which I made in good faith, trusting to my memory, however, I was shown a copy of the estimates of the current year in which it is set forth that the sum of \$100,000 is asked for, or is to be asked for when these estimates are voted for the year 1905-6, for the construction of a fence along the international boundary of the Northwest Territories. But accompanying that statement in the estimates of the current year, in the proper column, there is also set out a statement that \$100,000 was voted last year, which entirely misled me, and I rose in my seat to apologize to the House yesterday for having made a statement which it appeared, by the estimates which are before us now, was not correct. I now find out on inquiry, and am credibly informed that no estimate was voted last year at all, and that the estimates that are put in our hands this year are not correct. Why that \$100,000 is inserted as having been voted last year I am entirely at a loss to know. I would not like to say, but it seems to me there is a history to it. The hon. the minister had been attempting to let a contract, a contract in advance of an estimate, without the sanction of parliament, and in order to cover up the transaction, apparently, the estimates which are placed in our hands are so filled up as to give the impression that \$100,000 was voted last year for this purpose.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. What page?

Mr. HENDERSON. Seventy-three of the estimates of the current year, under the term 'miscellaneous.' Now I find that the apology I made yesterday was quite unnecessary, that my first statement was correct, that there was no estimate, there was no appropriation in the previous year, that no appropriation existed for the construction of this fence, and that whoever was undertaking to let a contract—because there was an attempt to let a contract for the construction of this fence—was certainly proceeding too rapidly, not knowing whether this House would approve of the matter at all. Now whilst I make this apology for having as I then believed misled the House, I think some member of the government owes an apology to me for having misled me. I do not know what explanation can be given of this error—and I will not call it by any other name, I assume it is an error, but certainly it was a very misleading one. Under all the circumstances it seems to me that possibly there might have been a purpose in the error, owing to the fact that an attempt was made to let a contract for the construction of this public work, when no parliamentary appropriation had been made. Now I assume I am quite correct in saying that there was no appropriation last year. I think I understood the right hon. gentleman who leads the House to say, when speaking a few moments ago,

Mr. HENDERSON.

that there was no appropriation; and if I am in error, and I do not think I am, I think my information comes from a correct source, I have not examined the Supply Bill of last year, but I am assured that such a sum does not appear in the Supply Bill, that no appropriation was voted last year for this purpose.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I do not know whether that is correct or not.

Mr. HENDERSON. Probably the Minister of Finance will be able to explain the matter.

Mr. FIELDING. No, I must not answer offhand, I am having the matter looked up at this moment; perhaps before my hon. friend finishes his speech I may be able to answer more definitely.

Mr. HENDERSON. At any rate, this information has come to my hands since the House met this afternoon. I have not had time to verify it, but my information comes from a source that I am perfectly satisfied as absolutely correct. Now as a number of hon. gentlemen did not seem to take in the meaning of this letter fully when it was read by the Prime Minister, I propose to read the letter again, and perhaps to make some comments on it as I proceed. The letter is addressed to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, dated Ottawa, 10th May, 1905, not a very long letter. The letter is signed by 'Yours faithfully, W. W. Cory.' I take him to be the Deputy Minister of the Interior.

My Dear Sir Wilfrid,—Upon the 4th January last, acting under instructions from the then Minister of the Interior—

And here I think a mistake was made, I do not understand that the Minister of the Interior had anything to do with this contract or should have had anything to do with it. I think it was a matter properly coming under the care of the Minister of Public Works.

—I addressed a letter to the McGregor-Banwell Wire Fence Company of Walkerville, Ontario, advising them that it had been decided to erect a fence at the boundary line in the Northwest Territories, 100 miles of which was to be constructed this year and the balance next year, and asking that company to state the price for constructing a fence, known as a woven wire fence, to be 200 miles long, running east and west from Coutts on the boundary line south of Lethbridge; to be made of No. 9 wire, with iron posts, either solid or of pipe driven at least three feet into the ground, properly guyed and otherwise supported, and built in a thoroughly substantial way, having gates every fifteen miles. The price was to include the stringing of a telephone wire along the fence but not the putting in of instruments. The department was to furnish a surveyor to run the line.

Now I have heard this fence frequently spoken of as a barbed wire fence. Let me say that a woven fence could not possibly be a barbed wire fence, and the fact that it