

itoba. There you have the whole meaning of this matter of political expediency.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Oh, oh.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. What do these hon. gentlemen mean? Would they suggest that there is something behind? They seek to prove their case by the words of the Apostolic delegate, and I give them his words making clear his own meaning. It would be, politically expedient. Why? On account of any action to be taken here? No, but because the people in the Northwest Territories who were affected would have no objection to be taken into the province of Manitoba. That is all there is in the matter. Yet, in the face of a statement so obvious as this, you have the leader of a great party doing his best to show that there was something hidden on the part of the government of Canada in this matter. A few moments ago my hon. friend said that we would fight this question out elsewhere. I accept that challenge without any qualification. We will fight out this question in this House. We will fight it out elsewhere. We will fight it out on the charge that hon. gentlemen opposite have brought to the attention of the House. I have no fear about the result. This is not the first time in the thirty years of my experience that I have seen the Tory party playing this part of endeavouring to arouse the prejudices of the people. We shall meet again and shall discuss this question elsewhere. In the meantime, I accept the challenge of my hon. friend that we are responsible to the people; and that responsibility we shall not decline, but shall meet it in due time.

Hon. GEORGE E. FOSTER (North Toronto). Mr. Speaker, the unwonted heat the right hon. gentleman (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) developed in his speech was unnecessary to remind us of the weakness of his argument in the opening, and, in fact, during the greater part, of his remarks. Though so valiant, though he has fought for thirty years and is willing to fight for ever so many years more, he found himself obliged to plead the baby act in the very first sentence of his speech. His hon. friend the leader of the opposition (Mr. R. L. Borden), he said, had not given him notice that he was going to bring this new and unheard-of and unexpected question before the House. And this great, strong man of battle for thirty years endeavoured to make a little cheap capital against my hon. friend the leader of the opposition by imputing to him a want of courtesy. But, as he thinks it over the right hon. gentleman will remember that yesterday my hon. friend the leader of the opposition gave notice that he would again discuss this matter. And the reason he did not so fully discuss it yesterday was that there had been no word uttered by Monseigneur Sbarretti, and, for very good reasons and very prudent reasons, I think, my hon. friend (Mr. R. L. Borden) refused

Sir WILFRID LAURIER.

to fulfil the whole purpose of the discussion until Monseigneur Sbarretti had either been heard from or had refused to say anything about this matter. So that I do not think there was very much in that matter of lack of courtesy. My right hon. friend may refine on the technical point but he certainly came here yesterday fully prepared to make as much as he possibly could out of this question politically. My right hon. friend is, I have no doubt, doing some thinking these days.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Mr. FOSTER. And whether he and his colleagues and his followers are doing much thinking or not we may be certain that the people of this country are doing some thinking these days and I must say there is good material and plenty of it. But, Sir, let us ask now what my right hon. friend took such pains to deny yesterday. He took great pains to deny absolutely and categorically a great many things which are altogether of secondary importance. For instance he made a point against the Hon. Mr. Rogers because he said that they had not been invited on the initiative of the Dominion government to have a conference in Ottawa with reference to the extension or the boundaries. Neither did Mr. Rogers' statement declare that the invitation was on the initiative of the Dominion government. It might have been implied from that letter that it was or it might not, but in all conscience what difference did it make whether the invitation went from my right hon. friend in reply to a request or whether it was on his own initiative. As far as the facts of the case go what difference did it make? But there was a very authoritative, a very absolute and a very much cheered denial on the part of my right hon. friend of that first statement made by Mr. Rogers. He thought he had triumphantly floored his opponent when he contended that the interview had not taken place on his initiative. He made another strong point in connection with the interview in that the Manitoba government had from 1896 up to January of this year made no step by way of initiative towards getting an extension of their boundaries. The Manitoba government I suppose is a fairly sensible government. They knew that their legislature had backed up the demand for an extension of territory. It had done it once, it had done it a second time and possibly a third time, but a claim for extension of territory waits generally for the favourable period and during all this time there was the prospect of the erection of new provinces in the Northwest, a prospect coming closer to fulfilment and it was felt that the time when the Territories were to be erected into provinces would be an opportune moment for the Manitoba government to press for an extension of their boundaries,