

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Might I inquire whether the letter of the 23rd of February, which I observe in the public press, is included in the document brought down?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. No; I shall have to refer to that in a moment. In making this motion, I desire to make a statement. I desire at this moment to call the attention of the House to a statement which was published this morning in the newspapers of the city, and which I understand has been published in all the press of Canada. This statement is made by Mr. Rogers, a member of the Manitoba government, concerning the action taken by myself and by my colleagues upon an application made some time ago by the government of the province of Manitoba, under instructions from the legislature of that province, for an extension of its boundaries. I may say at once that it will be my duty, so far as the action of the government is concerned in this matter, to give the statement a direct, an absolute and a categorical denial. In order that there may be no misunderstanding, I think it is better that I should read to the House, and therefore place upon the records, the statement of Mr. Rogers, as I find it in the 'Citizen.' It is as follows:

On February 13, we received a formal invitation by telegraph from Sir Wilfrid to come to Ottawa as soon as convenient. We left on February 14 and arrived on the afternoon of the 16th, when we received a letter from Sir Wilfrid at the Russell House saying that he would be pleased to meet us at his office at mid-day on Friday, the 17th.

During that interview we presented the claims of the province as urgently and strongly as possible. In reply Sir Wilfrid said that if we would be good enough to remain in Ottawa for three or four days he would again send for us and would then be in a position to give us an answer.

In three days' time, on February 20, a letter was received from Monseigneur Sbarretti, asking for a conference. This invitation was accepted and His Excellency then presented the following memorandum, remarking that if we would place this on the statute-book of our province it would greatly facilitate an early settlement of our mission, the fixing of our boundaries, which would be extended to the shores of Hudson bay. His Excellency further added that our failure to act in the past had prejudiced our claim for extension westward. The following is a copy of His Excellency's memorandum, containing the proposed amendment to the Manitoba School Act:

MGR. SBARRETTI'S MEMORANDUM.

"Add to section 125.—(b).—And when in any city or town there shall be thirty or more Roman Catholic children and also thirty or more non-Roman Catholic children, or in any village more than fifteen of each of such classes, the trustees shall, if requested by a petition of parents or guardians of such number of such classes, provide separate accommodation for each of such classes and employ for them respectively Roman Catholic and non-Roman Catholic teachers.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER.

"Add to section 49.—(b).—And when in any district there shall be fifteen or more Roman Catholic children and fifteen or more non-Roman Catholic children, the trustees shall, if required by a petition of parents or guardians of such number of either of such classes, provide separate accommodation for each of such classes and employ for them, respectively Roman Catholic and non-Roman Catholic teachers."

DELAYING WITH A PURPOSE.

Notwithstanding Sir Wilfrid's invitation and our interview, followed by his promise of which he was reminded by our letter, strange to say, up to this very hour we have had no reply to ours of February 23. What more natural conclusion can be arrived at than that Sir Wilfrid is simply killing time and making pretexts in order that the polite invitation of Monseigneur Sbarretti could be acted upon by Manitoba.

In this way, of course, Sir Wilfrid thinks he can secure a political advantage for his friends in this province. This is a palpable political trick, which he is quite capable of undertaking, with the view to force the local government to do something which would be resented by the people and by this means he hopes to reinstate his Liberal friends in power here. I, for one, promise to take no chances in allowing Sir Wilfrid or any person else to take advantage of us by any underhanded scheme of this sort. All I ask is that every citizen of the province should have an opportunity of expressing his opinion by his vote as a protest against continued delay. I deny the right of Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Monseigneur Sbarretti to undertake to mix up the matter of separate schools with that of the extension of our boundaries, and I am sure that in so doing they do not reflect the wishes of either Roman Catholics or Protestants in the province. It ill-becomes the 'Globe' to make this charge against the government of Manitoba, when the only persons affected are Sir Wilfrid and Monseigneur Sbarretti.

LAURIER'S DOUBLE-DEALING.

We have no desire in Manitoba for double-dealing about this or any other question. This, however, appears to be a favourite course of Sir Wilfrid. For example, in 1896 he signed an official statement declaring himself to be entitled to credit for the final settlement of the Manitoba school question, while immediately following we find from the correspondence brought down in the parliament of Canada the following extract from a letter to Cardinal Rampolla, which he has never denied:

'It is desirable, if not necessary, that the mission of Monseigneur Merry Del Val should be renewed or rather continued, and that he should be present in the midst of us for a more or less prolonged time as the accredited representative of the Holy See.'

It will be remembered that Monseigneur Merry Del Val was appointed Papal delegate by His Holiness the Pope on the petition of Sir Wilfrid and forty odd members of the parliament of Canada. The petition was presented to His Holiness by Mr. Fitzpatrick and further urged by the Canadian legal representative in London, England, Charles Russell, who was afterwards instructed to go to Rome as Sir Wilfrid's representative, and who, on November 26, 1897, addressed the following to Cardinal Rampolla, secretary of state to the Pope.