

Sir Wilfrid Laurier had not when so interrogated, denied having such consultations and that you would resign your seat in the House if I could prove from 'Hansard' my statement to be true.'

That letter has been in his possession from June 21 to the present time, but he has never taken occasion to deny that in any way, shape or form. The issue is a plain, clear and distinct one, and I think the proof is beyond controversy. I leave it to my hon. friend to pursue what may seem to him the proper course.

Committee divided on the amendment to the amendment Mr. Bergeron.

Amendment (Mr. Bergeron)—negatived. Yeas 6; Nays 125.

On the amendment:

Mr. LAMONT. Before this amendment is put there is a point which I would like to have made a little clearer than it is at present. This point has been adverted to by several hon. members in this debate and in calling the attention of the government and of the committee to it, I recall the language of the Prime Minister yesterday when he said that if the language of this section now under discussion was not sufficient to carry out the object which the government had in view he would be prepared to consider any reasonable amendment to it. The object which the government has in view by this clause as stated yesterday by the Prime Minister and as stated a few moments ago by the Minister of Inland Revenue is to carry into effect the very excellent school system now in force in the Northwest Territories. That school system was established in 1892 by the ordinance of that year. Since 1892 when it was established it has worked very satisfactorily to the people of the west and the object of the government as I understand is to perpetuate that system and continue it in the new province of Saskatchewan and Alberta. The principle of the system contained in the ordinances is two-fold. In the first place it secures to the local government the absolute control and jurisdiction over secular education in the Northwest Territories. In the second place it leaves the religious instruction absolutely in the control of the trustees of the school districts. Under that system as established by the ordinances from 9 a.m. until 3.30 p.m., the school system is absolutely under the control and jurisdiction of the local government and the instruction given in the schools, public and separate alike is purely secular instruction. From 3.30 p.m. until 4 o'clock p.m. religious instruction may be given, if desired by the trustees. The reason for that two fold principle is the system established by the ordinance is, that secular education being a national affair ought to be under the absolute control and jurisdiction of the state, while religious instruction, being a domestic matter ought to be under the con-

Mr. PORTER.

trol and jurisdiction of the parents of the children. So far as secular education is concerned I am satisfied, the language of this clause is sufficient to carry out the object of the government and to continue to the provincial governments in those new provinces the absolute jurisdiction and control over all schools in the new provinces. But in so far as the religious instruction is concerned, I am not satisfied that the language used in this section is sufficient to carry out the object of the government and to continue to the schools of the new provinces the present provisions in the Northwest Territories ordinances, which allow one-half hour's religious instruction to be given in the schools if desired by the trustees. The clause, in so far as separate schools are concerned, places the matter, it seems to me absolutely beyond question, because clause 1 of sec. 16 provides: That the provincial government shall not pass any law which shall prejudicially affect any right or privilege with respect to separate schools which any class of persons have at the date of the passing of this Act under chapters 29 and 30 of the ordinances of the Northwest Territories. Under chapters 29 and 30 provision is made for one-half hour's religious instruction in the separate schools from 3.30 to 4 o'clock p.m., and I am satisfied the language of the clause will carry into effect the object of the government and continue to the separate schools the half hour's religious instruction. But in so far as the public schools are concerned I am not satisfied that the half-hour's religious instruction granted by the ordinances will be continued. And that is the point to which I wish to call the attention of the committee and which I would like to have made clearer. I want the clause when it is passed to be so plain and clear that there will be no doubt whatever that in the public schools of the new provinces, the half-hour's religious instructions now given by the ordinances will be continued. In order to make that clear and to place it beyond the realm of controversy and to make certain that the object of the government will be carried out, I move, Mr. Chairman, that to subsection one, there be added these words:

Or with respect to religious instruction in any public or separate school as provided for in the said ordinances.

This will make it absolutely clear in my opinion that the object of the government will be carried out, and that there will be continued to the public as well as to the separate schools the right to have half an hour of religious instruction, if the trustees so desire. With regard to the position taken by the hon. member for Beauharnois (Mr. Bergeron) and the hon. member for Labelle (Mr. Bourassa), that where the Catholics are in a majority they should be allowed to form church schools, I cannot concur. We