

When a petition of the legislature of a province is laid on the table of the House by a member of this House, I would think that was a very distinct calling of the attention of the government to that petition. The right hon. gentleman is leader of the government, but he is also leader of this House. We always refer to him in that way; and when a petition for aid or a petition for extension of boundaries is laid upon the table of the House of Commons, I would very respectfully submit that it is called to the attention of the government just as effectively as if a copy were sent to the government direct. I do not know of what use it would otherwise be to present such a petition to parliament. All of us know that legislation of that kind could only be initiated by the government, and it is idle to present any such petition to parliament unless it is intended by so doing to bring it to the attention of the government in order that they may initiate the legislation necessary to carry out the request. I think my right hon. friend, on looking carefully over that portion of his remarks to which attention has been called, will see that the impression left upon our minds, certainly the impression left upon my own mind, was that he had no knowledge whatever of the resolutions of the Manitoba legislature except what he had derived from the public press of the country. I have no doubt that the right hon. gentleman made that statement in the most perfect good faith, but at the same time it was hardly accurate under the circumstances.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. If I may be permitted, Mr. Speaker, to reply to my hon. friend, I must say that when I spoke I had no knowledge of those resolutions except what I had derived from the press of the country. It turns out now that a petition was laid on the table of this House. I have no recollection of that and I doubt if any one else has any recollection of it or took much interest in it; because dozens of petitions are presented to the House to which very little attention is paid, and unless my attention were specially called to it, I would probably know nothing about it. But the executive government of Manitoba never took any action on this matter until the month of January, 1905.

REPORT PRESENTED.

Report of the Inland Revenue Department on the Adulteration of Food, part 3.—Hon. L. P. Brodeur.

VACANCY IN THE CABINET.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Before the Orders of the Day are called, I would like to ask the Prime Minister whether or not he has now any information to give to the House

with regard to the filling of the vacant portfolio of the Interior? It is not my purpose to discuss that to-day and I simply rise for the purpose of obtaining information. I do so particularly in view of certain observations of the Minister of Customs last evening which I interpreted as an intimation to the House that it is the intention of the government in the immediate future to open a constituency in Manitoba or the Northwest in connection with the filling of that portfolio.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I have no information to give my hon. friend to-day, but if he will renew his question at an early date perhaps I can satisfy him.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Perhaps it might ease the situation a little if my right hon. friend (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) would regard me as repeating this question every day and give an answer every day just as if I had asked the question.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. This is a world of trouble.

PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY IN THE NORTHWEST.

House resumed adjourned debate on the proposed motion of Sir Wilfrid Laurier for the second reading of Bill (No. 69) to establish and provide for the government of the province of Alberta, and the amendment of Mr. R. L. Borden, thereto.

Mr. L. G. MCCARTHY (North Simcoe). Mr. Speaker, in resuming this debate I wish to say that the tenor of my remarks has been somewhat altered from what it would otherwise have been owing to certain remarks which were made yesterday and also to certain remarks that have fallen from the lips of the leader of the opposition (Mr. R. L. Borden) and the member for Beauharnois (Mr. Bergeron) during this debate. If I understood the leader of the opposition aright he stated that the late hon. member for North Simcoe (Mr. Dalton McCarthy) had been 'established' in the province of Ontario by the right hon. the Prime Minister for the purpose of denouncing the Conservative government in their policy of the coercion of Manitoba. Then the hon. member for Beauharnois, from his place in the House spoke as follows:

Our friend Mr. Dalton McCarthy had gone on a tour through the province of Manitoba. He was dissatisfied because Sir John Thompson had been chosen as Minister of Justice. He had hopes of being offered that position, although he might have refused it, and he went to Manitoba and inflamed the passions of the people. He told them that something should be done to deliver them from the influence of the hierarchy. It was there that he commenced his strife against the hierarchy, and questions of that sort will always greatly inflame public opinion.