

boundaries of the province should be extended westward, northward and eastward—westward, that it should have a part of the new province of Saskatchewan, a part of the districts of Assiniboia and Saskatchewan; northward, that they should have the territory towards the north, and eastward towards Hudson bay. I may say at once that we discussed this at some length, in fact at considerable length. When Mr. Rogers advanced the claim on behalf of Manitoba, that its boundaries should be extended westward and include part of the present districts of Assiniboia and Saskatchewan, we presented to Mr. Rogers what seemed to be a very strong objection to that. We told Mr. Rogers in fact: that this claim had been considered by the government of Sir John Macdonald in 1884 and had not been granted; that the reasons which existed in 1884 for refusing the prayer of Manitoba were far stronger to-day than they were then; that at that time that part of the Territories was in its infancy, but that at present it had a considerable population, as advanced as the population of Manitoba. That there was the objection further: that the legislature of the Territories had protested against its being annexed to Manitoba, and therefore we did not see how it was possible to grant that part of the prayer of the province of Manitoba. With regard to the northern portion of the district of Saskatchewan, we said to Mr. Rogers and to his colleague, Mr. Campbell: we do not know that there is any objection to granting you the upper portion of the district of Saskatchewan; it is true that we understand there is an objection raised, but it is a question which can be discussed later on; at all events, we do not intend to introduce this part of the territory of Saskatchewan into the new provinces and we had better leave it for further discussion.

When it came to a discussion on the extension of the boundary eastward, towards Hudson bay, my colleague the Postmaster General, who was with me then, at once took strong objections to that claim of Manitoba. He stated that in his opinion it would not be fair to the province of Ontario that that claim should be considered unless the province of Ontario had an opportunity to discuss it with the province of Manitoba. That was on the 17th of February. I do not remember that I said to Mr. Rogers and Mr. Campbell that if they were to wait for some days we would again send for them and be in a position to give them an answer. What I distinctly remember stating, as it was my duty to do, was that their representations would be brought to the attention of the Council, and that probably they would get an answer at an early date. More than this I do not remember stating, and I do not think I did. The two Bills for the creation of the provinces of

Saskatchewan and Alberta were introduced on the following Tuesday, the 21st of February. Both Mr. Rogers and Mr. Campbell were present on the floor of this House and heard the statement I then made. That statement was that I had the authority of my colleagues to say that we could not see our way to extend the boundaries of the province of Manitoba westward, for the reasons which I have just given, that we had reserved the northern portion of the district of Saskatchewan for future action, and that with regard to extending the boundaries of Manitoba to Hudson bay we were of opinion that the province of Ontario and the province of Quebec should be consulted. Mr. Rogers heard this statement, and, therefore, knew what was the policy of the government on that question.

This shows one thing, that this policy of ours was settled then and there, without interference from anybody, without participation by anybody. We settled our own business according to our lights. We told the province of Manitoba that we could not extend its boundaries westward for the reasons we gave, and on that decision we took our stand before this House and maintained it. But we stated we were prepared to consider the claim of the province of Manitoba for extension northward towards Hudson bay in connection with the claims of the new province of Saskatchewan and the provinces of Ontario and Quebec. Since that time we have embodied these views in a Minute of Council, which has been communicated to the Manitoba government. There is no difference between the Minute of Council and the statement I made on the floor of this House on the 21st of February except this, that in the Minute of Council, after having given the matter due consideration, we take the view that there is no reason for calling the province of Quebec to that conference, because it is not sufficiently interested in the matter; but we declare our readiness, immediately after the creation of the new provinces, to have a conference, in which the provinces of Saskatchewan, Ontario and Manitoba will be represented. That is the position in which the matter now stands.

My hon. friend the leader of the opposition has called my attention to a letter of Mr. Rogers of the 23rd of February. That letter is not in the interview as reported in the 'Citizen,' but I found it in another paper, the Toronto 'Star' of yesterday, and is as follows:

Russell House, Ottawa, February 23, 1905.

Sir,—As we find it necessary to leave Ottawa to-morrow, we desire to refer to our interview of Friday, the 17th, respecting Manitoba's claim for extension of her boundaries westward and northward, when you were good enough to suggest that if we would come here for two or three days you would be in a position to give us an answer respecting same. Up to the present, however, we have heard nothing further from you, excepting your statement in parlia-

Sir WILFRID LAURIER.