

fore His Holiness, while assuring him at the same time of my profound respect and of my filial attachment.

Accept, Eminence, the expression of the high consideration with which I remain.

Now, Sir, that letter is signed by Wilfrid Laurier; it was written, I imagine, to His Eminence Cardinal Rampollo. So much with reference to that.

Let us carry this out a little further. Not only was this letter written by the right hon. gentleman, who then led and who now leads the government, but a certain counsel was arranged for who was accredited and instructed by this government to visit Rome and to bring about what the right hon. gentleman had made a beginning of in the letter which I have just read. The agent whom they used as an intermediary was appointed by this government after they had dismissed—for purposes of state I wonder, or what?—one of the best and most eminent of the legal counsel that this government has ever had in the city of London. On the 26th of November, at Rome, in the year 1897, Mr. Russell writes the following letter:

Eminence,—I have just arrived at Rome once again at the urgent request of the Catholic members of the government and of the parliament of Canada, in whose name I have already presented myself to you. Although I have come so far I do not dare to present myself to Your Eminence, because I would not in the least like at this moment to seem to be bringing pressure to bear or to wish to impede the complete liberty of His Holiness. Moreover, I know how busy Your Eminence is and I remember with what patience Your Eminence has so many times before heard our representations on the subject of Manitoba, which, besides Your Eminence now fully understands.

This is a very good pointer that it is not spiritual matters, that it is not any disagreement amongst the bishops or amongst the clergy, but that it is for party reasons, and for party reasons alone, that it is urged, reasons arising from the exigencies of the Reform party.

I should not even like to give you the trouble to read this letter if I had not been very particularly asked to go to Rome by those whom I represent, and who, living far from Rome, do not know quite what to do in order to plead their cause and fulfil their duty to the Holy See.

This is therefore why I take the liberty of writing to Your Eminence as follows:

Some days ago the newspapers caused to appear an item by which it was set forth that His Holiness had published a letter condemning in the most formal terms the concessions obtained for the Manitoba schools.

Obtained by whom? By whom were these concessions obtained?

A few days afterwards a declaration of official appearance made it known that no such letter existed.

Although not resting upon any foundation, the publication of this news has created in

Canada such a state of feeling that my principals thought they would be wanting in their duty to His Holiness if they did not bring their respectful representations before him.

The object of my visit is to call the attention of Your Eminence to the subject upon which I have so often negotiated—

He had been there before it appears and on the same errand!

—to know that such a condemnation would have the most disastrous effects for the peace of Canada and the cause of Catholic education in this country, while at the same time it would sow discord among the Catholics themselves.

Now, this is the gist of the whole matter.

We do not solicit His Holiness to sanction as perfect the concessions obtained, but that in his wisdom he will be pleased to regard them as a beginning of justice. With the aid of time and thanks to the patient work of persuasion by their compatriots, the Catholics of Manitoba may hope to obtain satisfaction. The condemnation of the concession made would, at the present hour, render (I am begged to insist upon this point)—

Begged by whom? By those who sent him there; begged by the right hon. gentleman and those who sent him there.

The condemnation of the concession would, at the present hour, render (I am begged to insist upon this point) any future concessions impossible. My instructions enjoined me again to renew to Your Eminence the desire, which I had already the honour to express to you, that His Holiness will be pleased to name a permanent delegate in Canada. The representative of His Holiness would reside on the spot, but would be outside local interests, and thus he could with more wisdom guide Catholics through the difficulties which they have to surmount.

There is another point which I dare to beg Your Eminence to be good enough to consider.

Almost immediately when the Latin text of the letter of the Holy Father appears, difficult and even contradictory translations will appear and, I am sure of it, most regrettable discussions will at once arise as to the interpretation of the words of His Holiness: In order to avoid such a misfortune may I be permitted to suggest to Your Eminence how desirable it would be that the Latin text should be accompanied by authorized texts in French and English. This procedure has been followed, if I recollect aright, on several occasions in the case of France and of England.

I shall leave Rome on Saturday, till that day I am entirely at the disposal of Your Eminence.

This was written by Mr. Russell, who, as he says, acted under special instructions of the Catholic members of the government, including Sir Wilfrid Laurier.

Mr. FISHER. May I ask what is the hon. gentleman quoting from?

Mr. FOSTER. I am quoting from a return brought down to the Senate.

Mr. FISHER. Of what year?