

ter (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) expressed himself as willing that this Bill should be treated. This is what the right hon. gentleman said :

I do not say that our drafting is absolutely unimpeachable.

I do not say that my drafting is absolutely unimpeachable.

I have stated our view and aim, and to this aim and purpose we propose to adhere—

I say the same thing about my amendment.

—but I do not intend to be committed absolutely to the drafting of clause No. 2.

And I do not intend to be committed absolutely to the drafting of this amendment.

If it be insufficient, we are willing to consider any reasonable amendment, provided it be on the line I have stated and on no other.

And, as to my amendment, I am willing to be bound by those very words. My hon. friend the Minister of Justice (Mr. Fitzpatrick) indulges in some persiflage at my expense. I can stand a great deal of that kind of thing—I can stand even more than that. But what I want—and this is the object of my amendment—is that there shall be no misunderstanding as to what we are voting for. If he can phrase it in any better way, I will be happy to accept his suggestions. I am sincere in this matter. I am not doing this to embarrass anybody. My object is to render justice to the minority in the Northwest. Now, the hon. gentleman has put a good many questions to me; perhaps he will be good enough to answer two questions of mine. In the first place, what is the difference between clause 16 in the original Bill and clause 16 as amended? And, in the second place, why did he (Mr. Fitzpatrick) make the change—for what consideration?

Mr. FITZPATRICK. I do not intend to enter into a controversy with the leader of the opposition (Mr. R. L. Borden) as to the relative merits of drafting. I can only say that the drafting that I brought down was good—if I do say it myself, it was pretty good. I know some people who have said that it was very good—

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I hope the minister—

Some hon. MEMBERS. Order.

Mr. CAMPBELL. Sit down.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I will sit down in a moment. I trust the Minister of Justice did not understand me as casting any aspersion upon the drafting of the Bill as a whole. I pointed to one clause which seemed to contain an obvious error, as the words, apparently, had no meaning. And this I pointed to as a fair answer to his comments upon the amendment of my hon. friend from Beauharnois (Mr. Bergeron).

Mr. BERGERON.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. If I were to attempt any criticism of myself in these matters, I would not criticise my drafting, but my good nature. I am tempted, through my good nature, to make changes, even when I think they are not at all necessary. However, this is a lesson to me by which I may profit in the future. The question is as to the merits of the amendment—not as to whether it is well drafted or not. The Prime Minister said, when he introduced the Bill, that he was not only willing, but anxious, that any improvement possible should be suggested. And here is the answer, on the part of my hon. friend (Mr. Bergeron), in the shape of an amendment to this clause 16, No. 2. By way of meeting the suggestion of the Prime Minister that suggestions for improvement will be welcome, the hon. gentleman (Mr. Bergeron) gives us this amendment, which, I say, has no meaning.

Mr. BERGERON. That is the hon. gentleman's (Mr. Fitzpatrick's) opinion.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. That is my opinion. And I would like the hon. gentleman (Mr. Bergeron) to name any lawyer on the other side of the House who will say that it has any meaning. He told us that his reason for introducing this amendment was to make the meaning of section 16, No. 1, clear. In what respect does it make it clear? Does it make it clear by declaring merely that this section is to guarantee full liberty to the majority in a school section? Does it make it clearer, so far as it omits any reference whatever to the Dominion land fund or securing any portion of that fund to the minority? Does it make it clearer so far as it omits all reference to the assessment? Does it make it clearer so far as it omits to make any provision for the maintenance of these separate schools that the hon. gentleman speaks about?

Mr. BERGERON. Does the hon. gentleman (Mr. Fitzpatrick) want an answer to that?

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Yes.

Mr. BERGERON. If the hon. gentleman is sincere, he knows what I mean by this clause; he knows that I want to secure to the minority all that they are entitled to. If the phraseology of my amendment is not correct, let the hon. gentleman improve it and I will be glad.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. It is not necessary that I should improve it. We had the amendment of the hon. member for Labelle (Mr. Bourassa), in whose amendment there was some meaning.

Mr. BERGERON. And I voted for it, and the hon. gentleman (Mr. Fitzpatrick) voted against it.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Then why weary the House with a repetition of the same thing? If this amendment means anything,