

ment of Manitoba, upon this subject. I shall take the liberty of referring to that interview of Mr. Rogers, so that the House will better understand the point to which I am about to direct its attention. Mr. Rogers said in this interview:

It is not a matter of agreement. We are simply presenting the unanimous request of the people of our province for the extension of our boundaries at least as far west as Regina and north as far as the northern boundary of Athabaska, which would include Fort Churchill, the Nelson river and the territory tributary thereto. This is no new request on behalf of Manitoba. In 1901 a resolution was introduced in the legislature by Mr. T. A. Burrows, then a member of the legislature and now a member of the Dominion parliament. This resolution was supported by Mr. Greenway, who was then leader of the opposition, now a member of the House of Commons. This was accepted and supported by the government of the day and voted for by every member of the House. A similar resolution was introduced by Mr. Roblin, leader of the government, and unanimously carried in 1902. A further resolution was introduced at the recent session and voted for by every member of the legislature, in which action they reflected the unanimous desire of all Manitobans. Mr. Campbell and myself have been appointed to come here to plead for what is considered by Manitoba to be her just claims, before the government who are the tribunal in the case and whose decision must be final.

I may observe that Mr. Rogers might have gone back much further than 1901 for records of the presentation of the claims of Manitoba for an extension of territory. Indeed as far back as 1884 a similar request was presented to the government of Sir John Macdonald. At that time the Privy Council dealt with this question in these words:

The boundaries of Manitoba were originally fixed at the instance of the delegates from that province who came to Ottawa in 1870 to adjust with the government of Canada the terms upon which Manitoba was to enter the confederation of Her Majesty's North American provinces.

The limits then agreed to embrace an area of about 9,500,000 acres. In the year 1881 these limits were enlarged and territory added to the west and north, making the total area of the province 96,000,000 acres or 150,000 square miles.

The further enlargement now asked for by Manitoba would add about 180,000 square miles to the already large area of the province, and would be viewed with disfavour as well by the old provinces as by the new districts of Assiniboia, Saskatchewan, Alberta and Athabaska, which have been created in the Northwest Territories, and which will ultimately become provinces of the Dominion. It would largely add to the expense of the government, without increasing the resources of Manitoba, already pronounced by the government of the province to be insufficient to meet its normal and necessary expense.

The committee, under these circumstances, humbly submit to Your Excellency, that it is inexpedient to alter the boundaries of the province as prayed for.

This answer to the request of Manitoba was a categorical refusal. I may say that there is an error in this Order in Council.

It states that the area of the province of Manitoba at that time was 150,000 square miles, whereas it was only 73,000. That, however, is not very material. But I want to point out that the request of Manitoba now is one which could not be granted except with great difficulty. It would have been far more easy for the government of that day, twenty years ago, to have extended the limits of Manitoba than it would be to-day. At that time the Territories were still in their infancy; but to-day they have grown to manhood, and how can it be expected that we shall take from them a portion of their territory to give it to Manitoba? If this could not be done in 1884, I submit that there is still less reason for doing it in 1905.

Mr. SPROULE. Might I ask the right hon. gentleman if in that calculation was not included the disputed territory between Manitoba and Lake Superior?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. No, I think not. It was in dispute at that very moment. But even if it had been included, what would it have mattered? We want to deal as fairly as we can with Manitoba and to give it all the consideration which is due to her. But is there a member of this House who would advise us that we should carve out of the Territories which for thirty years have been under the jurisdiction of their own legislature, which are to-day represented by ten members in this House, any portion of what belongs to them and hand it over to the province of Manitoba against the consent of the people of those territories? If they agreed to it, well and good; I would have nothing to say. But the legislature of the Territories has more than once declared that they would not under any circumstances consent to any portion of their territory westward of the province of Manitoba being taken from them.

There is another consideration. For my part, I am prepared to give a full hearing to the province of Manitoba. When that province asks to have her limits extended westward, I am bound to say that we cannot entertain that prayer, for this simple reason, that the Territories, through their legislature, have passed upon it and have pronounced against it. But I understand that as to a certain portion of territory north of Lake Winnipegosis and Lake Manitoba, the Northwest legislature has declared that it has no pronounced views, and that that might be given to the province of Manitoba. But even this I am not prepared for my part to grant at this moment; because members representing that section to-day sit on the floor of this House, and they and their people have the right to be heard on that question; and if they do not agree to it, I do not think the parliament of Canada should make the grant against their wishes.

But, Sir, there is another demand of the