

I do not know anything about the letter of the 23rd of February which has been referred to to-day except that I received a telegram only this morning from the attorney general of Manitoba, who evidently had observed that this letter had not been included in the documents brought down, and he asked me to mention the matter to the Prime Minister and to see that it was brought down with the other documents. That is the only knowledge I have with regard to it and it is quite evident that Mr. Rogers and Mr. Campbell were thoroughly under the impression that that letter had not only been sent, but had been received by the Prime Minister. Assuming that that letter was written and should have been received it seems to bear out very strongly the view which Mr. Rogers had expressed in the interview alluded to by the Prime Minister. He says:

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.

They remained here not only two or three days, but as the letter shows until the 23rd of February, and they departed without receiving any answer or any intimation beyond that. But they received an intimation from His Excellency Monseigneur Sbarretti which has been dealt with by the Prime Minister and by Mr. Rogers in his interview. As to that I have nothing to say to-day nor have I anything to say with regard to the whole situation, although it may afford an opportunity for a little more debate later on. It seems to me that the explanation of the Prime Minister which has been made in consequence of the interview with Mr. Rogers might well have been made at some earlier date. My right hon. friend (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) is surely not unaware that in two very important journals, one of which at least is in very close touch with the administration and is supposed to have been controlled up to a day or two ago by a very prominent member of this administration, this very reason has been put forward. I would think that when a distinct rumour of that kind is heralded throughout the length and breadth of this country it might have been well for the Prime Minister at an earlier date to take an opportunity of contradicting that which he has so strongly contradicted to-day. He knows that every prominent journal in Canada has published words which are to be found in the Northwest 'Review,' in the later part of February or early in March and which are as follows:

Two days after the 'Telegram' had trumpeted abroad the Hon. Robert Rogers' great hopes for the western extension of Manitoba, the same wise and prophetic journal deplores the

fact that there will be no such extension in any direction. But it omits to give the reason thereof. The only obstacle to the territorial expansion of our province is its iniquitous and cruel school system. Not even the wildest corner of any unorganized territory will consent to saddle itself with such a tyranny. Manitoba must be content to remain small and mean so long as it maintains its small and mean school policy.

That is a pretty direct statement. In so many words it says that until Manitoba alters its schools policy it shall not have its boundaries extended in any direction. That or a similar statement in the press was brought to the attention of the House and my right hon. friend paid some attention to it then, but did not pay attention to it in this connection. I have observed his words carefully. He said there was no intention on the part of this administration to attempt any remedial legislation with respect to schools in Manitoba, but I did not observe in my right hon. friend's remarks on that occasion any suggestion that the statement I have read was absolutely without foundation, may I observe to the right hon. gentleman that it might have been better in the interests of the whole country that some such utterance as that which he has made to-day should have been made in consequence of the statement in the press to which I have referred? In a journal, controlled as it is said—I know not with what truth—by a member of the administration until within the last two or three days, the same statement is made in very specific language, and it is right to observe also that this journal claims to be the special mouthpiece of the right hon. gentleman (Sir Wilfrid Laurier). He has disclaimed that and I accept his disclaimer to the full. He says he is not interested in that journal, but the journal itself declares that it is the organ of the Liberal party, and that it is under the direction and absolute control of Sir Wilfrid Laurier. That journal has said:

The school legislation of the little province—

That is the province of Manitoba.

—is not of a nature to attract immigrants who people the districts. The Northwest has its separate schools, Manitoba has abolished them.

Every good act has its reward, every bad act its chastisement.

Manitoba will remain lowest with her pretentious law.

A little before that the same paper says:

In proportion to her big sisters Manitoba will count as little more than a large county.

In view of these suggestions, they are more than suggestions, in view of these direct statements, one of them made by a journal supposed to be under the control of a very prominent member of the administration, and claiming for itself to be under the absolute direction and control of the