

government at that time wise and prudent, before acceding to the request, that the adjacent provinces of Ontario and Saskatchewan, which, perhaps, might have also a claim to the territory which was sought by Manitoba, should have an opportunity of being heard. We therefore extended an invitation to the several provinces to meet us and discuss this question. A conference took place in November, 1906, at which all the respective governments that I have just named were represented. The Dominion government was represented by the Prime Minister, the Minister of Justice and the Minister of the Interior; the Ontario government by Mr. Whitney, the premier, Mr. Foy, the Attorney General, and Mr. Matheson, the Provincial Treasurer; the government of Manitoba by Mr. Roblin, the Premier, Mr. Rogers and Mr. Campbell, the Attorney General, and Saskatchewan by Mr. Walter Scott, the Premier, and Mr. Lamont, the Attorney General. The province of Saskatchewan, at that conference, through its representatives, asked to be allotted the territory which extends north-eastward of the provincial boundary to the shores of Hudson bay. After giving due consideration to this claim on the part of the province of Saskatchewan, it seemed to us, that, as between the claim of the province of Saskatchewan and of the province of Manitoba to have the territory which lies north of Manitoba and west of Saskatchewan allotted either one way or the other, the weight of argument was certainly in favour of Manitoba and we could not grant the prayer of Saskatchewan. We therefore had to ignore it. We are prepared to admit the claim of Manitoba to have its boundary extended northward up to the 60th parallel of latitude. But a difficulty arose as between the provinces of Manitoba and Ontario as to the extension of the boundary eastward. The claim of Manitoba was that its territory should be extended eastward, north of the Albany river, that is to say, between the Albany river and Hudson bay, to a meridian line drawn from the confluence of the Mississippi and Ohio rivers. Perhaps some hon. member may ask: Why bring the line of the confluence of the Mississippi and Ohio rivers into this question? The older members of the House will remember that this line was exhumed out of old documents at the time of the controversy between Sir John Macdonald and Sir Oliver Mowatt as to the boundary line between Ontario and Manitoba. It is not necessary to go into that old controversy to-day but let me say at once that if the prayer of Manitoba had been granted and if its boundary had been extended over the northern boundary of Ontario between the Albany river and the waters of Hudson bay as prayed for, the eastern boundary of Manitoba and the western boundary of Ontario in this new territory which is to be allotted would have been brought into the vicinity of the longitude of

Sir WILFRID LAURIER.

Fort William, Port Arthur and Lake Nepigon. The government did not think it would be advisable to agree to such a claim as that.

On the other hand, the province of Ontario, represented on that occasion by Mr. Whitney, Colonel Matheson and Mr. Foy, urged that the boundary of Ontario should be the Churchill river, that the boundary of Manitoba should be a continuation of the present boundary of that province northward until it reached the Churchill river and then that the Churchill river should be the boundary between the two provinces. As the two provinces could not agree upon their respective claims it became the duty of the government to give to the matter its very best consideration and to endeavour to arrive at a conclusion which would commend itself to the judgment, not perhaps of both parties, but of all fair minded men. We could not agree to the claim of the province of Ontario that the Churchill river should be made the boundary for one very obvious reason which will, I think, commend itself to all those who do me the honour of listening to me. It is expected that the new railway to Hudson bay will have its terminus at Churchill; in fact, it cannot have its terminus anywhere else. Churchill is known to be the best of the harbours on Hudson bay and perhaps the only harbour. The only rival harbour possibly is the harbour at the mouth of the Nelson river but I understand, although I speak subject to correction, that, as between the two harbours, Churchill is by far the preferable one. At all events, I think it is admitted that the mouth of the Churchill river should be the terminus of the railway. If the terminus of the railway is to be at the mouth of the Churchill river it is reasonable to expect that a town of some proportions must eventually grow up at the mouth of that river, and if you have the two provinces separated by the Churchill river, Manitoba on the one side and Ontario on the other, and a town growing up upon both sides of the river, it is manifest that complications would arise and that the progress of the city might be materially retarded for the necessity of having legislation either from one province or the other. Therefore, it is far preferable, far more convenient and far more suitable in every possible way that the city be either in one province or the other.

Taking all these things into consideration we believed we could not grant the prayer of the province of Ontario to extend its boundary to the Churchill river. After giving the matter the best consideration we could we came to what we think is a fair conclusion and one which will be acceptable to all reasonable men, namely, to fix the boundary of Manitoba from the north-east corner of the province of Manitoba extending it over the height of land between