

prescriptions and prohibitions of Your Illustrious predecessor; protect the consciences of the Catholic electorate, and thus secure peace in our country by the union of religion and liberty—a union which Your Holiness has many times extolled in those immortal encyclicals whose previous teachings we desire in all things to follow; and, lastly, grant to the children of the Church now addressing Your Holiness the Apostolic Benediction.

“(Signed by Wilfrid Laurier and forty-six members of the Senate and House of Commons.)

“*Ottawa, Canada, 1896.*”

17. *Hansard*, House of Commons, p. 239, March 30, 1897.

HON. MR. TARTE (Minister of Public Works): The First Minister of this country (Hon. Wilfrid Laurier) was accused in Rome to the Papal authority of being a Freemason. Five Bishops went to Rome and several of them accused the Liberal party with being an anti-religious party. But they did something more. They said at the head of affairs was a bad Catholic, while at the head of the Opposition was a very pious man indeed, and of course it was better to replace that very bad Catholic by that most pious man.

MR. CASGRAIN: Do I understand the honourable gentleman to accuse the five Bishops who went to Rome, or any of them, of having said that the First Minister of the Dominion was a Freemason or a bad Catholic?

HON. MR. TARTE: The Bishop of Chicoutimi was interviewed a few days ago, and in the public Press he stated that he had himself told the Papal authorities that Wilfrid Laurier knew so little about religion that he did not expect anything else from him but neutral