

spatch from the British government of the date of October 3, laying down certain rules upon which volunteers would be accepted from Canada. It is possible that this despatch had not reached the premier at the time he made this statement when he was interviewed by the *Toronto Globe*, but the Minister of Public Works addressed a meeting in Toronto only three or four days ago, when he made the announcement that he had seen this despatch cabled in the English papers before it had been received in Canada by the government officially, and he made it a complaint and a point of etiquette between the government of Canada and Mr. Chamberlain that this despatch had been published in the British papers, and had been cabled and brought under the eye of members of the government of Canada in that way before they had received it officially from the British government. It was, therefore, evident, if Mr. Tarte is to be believed—and I suppose we have to believe him, for he is an hon. gentleman—that he, at least, knew of the contents of this despatch of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain before the time the premier gave this interview in the *Toronto Globe*.

Hon. Mr. MILLS—He could not.

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—Mr. Tarte says he did. This is certain that the premier, if he did not know it in the afternoon of October 3, must have known it not many hours later, for it was transmitted after five o'clock from London, and making allowance for the difference in time, it was in Ottawa early in the afternoon of October 3, and we are very sure the Governor General would be reached by an important despatch of that nature, no matter where he was, as fast as a telegram could be sent to him, and we all know too much about the care and exactness with which British statesmen do their work to believe that he kept that despatch back one moment longer than necessary from his prime minister. Therefore, it is very hard to understand that the prime minister did not have this despatch in his possession when he gave this interview to the *Toronto Globe*. He had a good means of knowing what was in the cable from the newspapers as the Minister of Public Works had. It does not say much for the solidarity of the government that one member of the cabinet would have information of that

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON.

character which he would keep for a moment from his premier. It is evident that some members of the government, at all events, knew of this despatch before the interview was given to the *Toronto Globe*. It is certain one member of the government knew it, and it is likely it was known to other members of the administration, and yet in the face of that the premier says:

There exists a great deal of misconception in the country regarding the powers of the government in the present case,' said Sir Wilfrid. As I understand the Militia Act, and I may say that I have given it some study of late, our volunteers are enrolled to be used in the defense of the Dominion. They are Canadian troops to be used to fight for Canada's defense. Perhaps the most widespread misapprehension is that they cannot be sent out of Canada. To my mind it is clear that cases might arise when they might be sent to a foreign land to fight. To postulate a case:—Suppose that Spain should declare war upon Great Britain. Spain has, or had, a navy, and that navy might be got ready to assail Canada as part of the empire. Sometimes the best method of defending oneself is to attack, and in that case Canadian soldiers might certainly be sent to Spain, and it is quite certain that they legally might be so dispatched to the Iberian Peninsula. The case of the South African Republic is not analogous. There is no menace to Canada, and, although we may be willing to contribute troops, I do not see how we can do so. Then again, how could we do so, without parliament granting us money? We simply could not do anything. In other words we should have to summon parliament. The government of Canada is restricted in its powers. It is responsible to parliament and it can do very little without the permission of parliament. There is no doubt as to the attitude of the government on all questions that mean menace to British interests, but in this present case our limitations are very clearly defined. And so it is that we have not offered a Canadian contingent to the Home authorities. The Militia Department duly transmitted individual offers to the Imperial government, and the reply from the War Office as published in Saturday's 'Globe' shows their attitude on the question. As to Canada furnishing a contingent, the government has not discussed the question, for the reasons which I have stated—reasons which I think must be easily understood by every one who understands the constitutional law on the question. The statement in the 'Military Gazette', published this morning, is a pure invention. Far from possessing any foundation, in fact it is wholly imaginative.

Then Mr. Tarte, at St. Vincent de Paul, puts himself on record as follows:—

But in the order in council, which I hold in my hand, and which will be published one of these days, it is said that what we have just done shall not be a precedent.

What I objected to—and I say it again, and I cannot say it often enough—is the creation of a precedent which would have permitted the Secretary of State for the Colonies to-morrow, the day after to-morrow, in a year, two years, to send us a message saying 'I should like some troops.'

But I do not wish that the operation be repeated on the next occasion.