

gests that it may have been a perjury. We cannot assume that.

Mr. BRITTON. I did not deal with this case at all.

Mr. CAMERON. No, but the hon. gentleman said that there might be affidavits and these affidavits might be false. We cannot assume that the parties who make these affidavits would commit, wilfully, a perjury. This case shows the wisdom of this provision in the law, and to repeal that provision would be to leave the law just as it was before. The unfortunate person convicted, although possibly innocent, would have to suffer the punishment of the law, or if that punishment were commuted, he would have to go through life pardoned, or the sentence commuted, with that stigma and stain resting upon his name, and his children and children's children would have to bear it for all time.

If the Government and Parliament will take my advice, and it is the result of 40 years experience, more or less, in the criminal as well as in the civil courts, they will not touch a single letter that the hon. gentleman seeks to repeal and amend by this Bill. In fact, unless at the instigation of the judges of our courts, who have daily experience of the administration of the criminal law, or at the suggestion of prominent lawyers who are conducting the business of the Crown, I would hardly change a letter in the Criminal Code. There may be here and there a little technicality that does not affect the merits of the Code and does not interfere with the administration of justice, there may be here and there a word which can be replaced to advantage with another word; but do not change this Criminal Code until you find it necessary to do so. And if there is a necessity to do so, let it be done under the responsibility of the Department of Justice. We have the Solicitor General here; let any change be made on his responsibility, and then we shall know exactly what we are doing. Meantime, I say to the Government: Vote against this Bill. And, in order to test the feeling of the House, I move that this Bill be not now referred to the Committee of the Whole House, but that it be referred to the Committee of the Whole House this day six months.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Cameron) is possibly not aware that the Bill has been read the second time.

Mr. CAMERON. I know, I did not happen to be here at the time. My motion is that it be not now committed but that it be committed this day six months.

The MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES (Sir Louis Davies). I rise with some trepidation on account of want of legal knowledge attributed to me by the hon. member for Huron. But I had several years experience as Attorney General of my

own province before coming here and have been practising for about twenty-five years in the court. I would ask my hon. friend (Mr. Cameron) to make a note of that. I think my hon. friend who introduces this Bill will receive the thanks of the Justice Department for the carefully prepared speech he has delivered and the information he has given. With the experience he has known to have had in the courts I am sure that what he has said will receive the most careful consideration in connection with the Criminal Code and its amendment. I share, but not to the same extent, the objection of by hon. friend (Mr. Cameron) has made to the amendment of the Criminal Code. But I do not entertain the same view that he has expressed as to the Code itself. I think in many respects it is loosely and very badly drawn. I do not know any Act upon our Statute-book that bears evidence of greater carelessness than this. Perhaps I may be held to blame for that. I was one of the members of the Parliament by which this Code was passed. The Act was one of six or seven hundred sections, and the thermometer ranged between 85 and 90 during the time when most of the sections was considered in committee. Several gentlemen sat here, I was almost going to say in their shirt sleeves, discussing it. In point of fact, there were hardly half a dozen members in the House when a large number of these sections went through committee. Still, I have a keen admiration of the Act generally, I think there is a great deal in the hon. gentleman's argument that no hasty changes should be made in the Code as it stands.

Now, I do not wish to refer to the subjects which the hon. gentleman (Mr. Britton) has referred to, but which he has not taken the responsibility of dealing with in his Bill. The hon. gentleman says that amendments can be suggested when we get into committee which he has not put in his Bill. That would be a dangerous course of procedure for this House to follow. I would suggest that if an amendment to the Criminal Code is to be proceeded with, some hon. gentleman should take the responsibility of moving it in the form of a Bill and putting it through its various stages so that it may be properly discussed. The remarks I shall make will be confined to three suggestions covered by the hon. gentleman's Bill. The first relates to section 181 of the Code, which enacts that one is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a certain term who seduces a girl between the ages of 14 and 16. The repeal of the wise provision which requires that some corroborative evidence should be given in some material particular is a proposal which, I think will not commend itself to the judgment of the House. I do not know why the hon. gentleman selected that particular section, but I remember very well that for years before this Criminal Code was passed my hon. friend from North Norfolk (Mr. Charlton)