

have altered since, nor have I found in the argument put forward grounds for change of opinion. Under these circumstances, I trust it will not be considered a lack of respect if I do not repeat now the answer I then made to the argument that was advanced. So far as any one may be interested in that answer, it is available in Hansard. I cannot refrain from expressing regret that the hon. member for St. Lawrence should have thought it necessary to suggest that the relative wealth or poverty of a man convicted under the law of this country has even the slightest bearing on the exercise of clemency by the Crown. I regret that he should have said that. I quite understand that there was no particular personal reference to me, but a grave reflection was cast on all of the gentlemen who have occupied the position that I occupy as well as upon the members generally of succeeding Governments. It is to be borne in mind that the action of the Crown in capital cases is taken on the advice of the Cabinet; I do not know that it would be quite safe to say that the reflection of the hon. gentleman does not go to the representative of the Crown itself. I do think it is unfortunate that a gentleman whose words are, generally speaking, entitled to the weight which is rightly given to the words of the hon. member for St. Lawrence should have allowed himself, in his zeal to bring about what I am satisfied he believes to be a most important reform, to commit himself to so grave a statement as that—a statement which, I am quite satisfied could not be supported by him. I do not purpose adding anything further; I really felt that I ought to make some expression with regard to the position taken by the hon. gentleman in this respect. With regard to his argument generally, I adhere to the view that I have already expressed and, adhering to that view, I feel—and my colleagues agree with me—that the Government cannot accept the measure which is now proposed. It has been suggested that we should have a committee to study this question. It is a question that has had a good deal of careful study, not only by members of this House, but on different occasions by commissions and committees appointed by other bodies, and I think the material bearing on the question is fairly available to those who are interested in studying it. I doubt very much whether anything could be added to the material available by the constitution of a committee such as is suggested. Moreover, at the present time so many things

[Mr. Doherty.]

of immediate, pressing urgency call for the devotion of our best intelligence, our best care and our best study to them, that I think the suggestion that a committee should be appointed could very well be deferred until, perhaps, a more favourable period. I do not think that there is call at the present time, at all events, for the taking up of the question in the manner that is suggested.

Mr. BICKERDIKE: I think I have the right to ask for a committee. Committees have been appointed at other sessions for the consideration of subjects much less important than this. I do not think that it is fair to say that I cannot get a committee because I sit on this side of the House; I do not think that even the Prime Minister would want to treat me in that way. I was hoping that the Prime Minister and the Minister of Justice might have agreed to appoint a committee. I do not ask that I may appoint the committee; I ask that the Prime Minister do so. Under the circumstances as one of the oldest members of this House I claim that I have the right to have a committee, and I ask that a committee be appointed. I would move now, seconded by the Hon. George P. Graham:

That Bill No. 2 be now read the second time and referred to a special committee, with instructions to report at the earliest possible moment.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order. The motion before the House is that Bill No. 2, to amend the Criminal Code, be now read the second time. The motion just made by the member for St. Lawrence is out of order; the House will have first to decide on the question before it.

The House divided on the motion of Mr. Bickerdike.

YEAS:

Messrs.

Bickerdike, Carvell,  
Graham, Macdonald—4.

NAYS:

Messrs.

Alguire,	Papineau,
Bennett (Simcoe),	Patenaude,
Blain,	Proulx,
Blondin,	Rhodes,
Boivin,	Rogers,
Borden (Sir Robert),	Seguin,
Davidson,	Shepherd,
Doherty,	Stewart (Lunenburg),
Fisher,	Webster,
Gray,	Wilson (Laval)—21.
Nicholson,	

Motion negatived.

On motion of Sir Robert Borden the House adjourned at 1.20 a.m. Tuesday.