

Manitoba Government, or what reasons they may have for seeking this power.

HON. MR. POWER—No; not for that purpose.

HON. MR. ABBOTT—I think the House would like to have the reasons of the Manitoba Government for asking for this, and that we should consider those reasons before we refuse what I consider very moderate and just propositions. We will let this clause stand for a day or two, and in the meantime communicate with the Attorney-General of Manitoba, informing him of the difficulties which have occurred in the passage of this clause, and enquiring why they desire to have it carried. Perhaps we may find that they do not desire to press it, or that they have excellent reasons for pressing it. We shall act as we always do on the facts that come before us.

HON. MR. POWER—I do not object to the clause standing over, but I must say I do not feel at all convinced by the arguments of the hon. gentleman. We are showing no disrespect to the Government of Manitoba. We have already passed one clause which they asked us to pass, and we propose to pass this clause in deference to their wishes, but I think the feeling of the majority of the House is that there should be some respect shown to the conscientious convictions of the parents of boys who are sentenced to this reformatory. I presume that the Manitoba Government have overlooked this, but whether it is an oversight or not, or whether the Manitoba Government think that no regard should be paid to the religious convictions of the parents, I think this House should not be influenced by their want of toleration. That is what I feel about it, and I think that is the feeling of the majority of the House—that no matter what the personal feelings of the Attorney-General of Manitoba may be, the superintendent of the Manitoba reformatory should not be allowed to bind children out to persons against the will of the parents of those children, where they have parents.

HON. MR. ABBOTT—I should like to know why my hon. friend assumes that the Government of Manitoba are going to be less considerate and humane than we should be? This is a purely permissive

clause. The hon. gentleman has no reason that I know of to assume that the Government of Manitoba would disregard all these considerations, when it is proposed to bind out a boy. We have no reason before us to show that they would not consider this question of religion as any other question. We assume, and we ought to assume, that they will exercise this discretion in a prudent and proper manner. It may be that they will make a provision that the parents of the children shall be consulted, and other provisions also, which must be conformed to before binding out a child.

We are simply passing a permissive clause to allow them to consider the subject, and make such regulations about it as they think proper.

HON. MR. MASSON—We are not acting differently with the Manitoba Government from what we would with this Government. Suppose instead of dealing with the Attorney-General for Manitoba it was proposed to give this power to the Minister of Justice, to act the same way, we would make exactly the same objection we are making now. We would not grant to the Minister of Justice the power that we are unwilling to grant to the Attorney-General of Manitoba, which proves that we are not making this objection because it happens to be the Attorney-General of Manitoba who is in question. What we are objecting to is giving to any Attorney-General the right to take a boy out of a reformatory, and place him where he might receive religious instructions which his friends or parents would be unwilling that he should receive. The law has provided that the boy shall be placed in a reformatory, and that while there, he shall be under certain guidance, and it is contrary to the intention of the law that any person shall stand between the boy and his family and place him where a religious training such as his parents would approve of would not be given him.

HON. MR. MURPHY—Might I enquire the reason for objecting to the reasonable proposition of the hon. gentleman from Halifax that the parents or guardians of the boy should be consulted, if they could be found, before binding him out? The Attorney-General might think that we wanted a much more radical alteration if we simply asked him to change that.