

HON. MR. SULLIVAN—I hope the House will not pass this clause. I have some experience of the way those children are treated when they are sent out to farmers, from my connection with an institution to which children are sent out from the old country. They are given out to farmers with every possible restriction: notwithstanding that, and that they are watched over carefully, every year there are frequent cases in which the institution has to take back children who are treated badly and neglected. The farming out of criminals, even, is a bad system. It is the duty of the State to take care of these boys. They require consideration and care more than any other class of the community, and I think it would be unwise for this House to grant such power to any province. Manitoba is a young, a rising and flourishing Province and is well able to take care of the few children who would come within the scope of this legislation. Therefore, I think it would be unwise, and attended with very great danger, to grant such power to the Provincial Government.

HON. MR. GIRARD—After such an expression of opinion, I hope the hon. Minister will not insist on this amendment. It is certainly fraught with danger, and much as I am interested in the Province of Manitoba, I must certainly protest against such a provision. It appears to be new legislation—at all events it will be new in old Manitoba, and it will certainly be received very badly by the people there. I agree with the hon. gentleman that any child who violates the law should be punished, but when he is sent to a reformatory he should remain there until his term expires. He should not be deprived of all his civil rights. The parents have a certain claim to him which cannot be ignored, and he should not be sent to a private family without their consent. Under the circumstances, I think the Minister should withdraw the amendment. Although it is proposed at the request of the Government of Manitoba, I am sure the people of the Province do not agree with the Government on that point. It would be a great injury to the people of Manitoba.

HON. MR. REESOR—The Minister should accede to the wish of the House and make it obligatory that the parents should be consulted.

HON. MR. ABBOTT—Some hon. gentlemen seem to imagine that this reformatory is a place where parents send their children to be educated and reformed. It is a place where boys convicted of crime are punished by imprisonment, and by the discipline of the reformatory. It is not like some of the industrial schools in the country where a parent can actually procure his child to be sent by an order of a magistrate when he finds him difficult to manage at home. It is a place where boys convicted of offences are sent. The probability in most cases is that these boys have no parents to refer to. They are waifs and strays about the streets of large towns. It does not follow at all that there are any parents to whom they could be sent.

HON. MR. PELLETIER—If they have parents, the parents should be consulted.

HON. MR. ABBOTT—If they have parents it would be possible no doubt for the State, having taken these criminals into custody for the purpose of punishing them, and endeavoring to reform them, to consult the parents. That does not seem to be the view of the Government of Manitoba. I do not pretend that this House is bound to pass a Bill because the Government of Manitoba wishes it to be passed, but I think this House is bound to show some respect for the reasonable request of any Province. It is no answer to my suggestion that we should give fair consideration to this proposal of Manitoba, and that we should attach importance to the fact that Manitoba asks us to pass this law—to say that we have a right to look at projects which they offer us. Of course, we have a right, but on the other hand we are bound by courtesy, to say the least of it, to consider carefully what they ask us to do before we refuse them. In this case they ask us to give them power to apprentice out criminal boys; they cannot do so without the power being given them for the purpose by this Parliament. I am bound to assume that if the power is given them they will exercise it with discretion. I should be very sorry to refuse their request, but of course it is in the power of the House to refuse it if they think proper. If it would conduce in any way to have a better understanding in the House about the clause I am willing to let it stand for a day or two, until we can ascertain the wishes of the