

to the chairmanship of the Committee of the Whole House. I am prepared to agree that Mr. Sevigny is a young member well qualified in many ways to fill that position. But what will the electors of Dorchester say when they hear that Mr. Sevigny is no longer to champion the policy he was elected upon? Like yourself, Sir, Mr. Sevigny when elected will be an arbiter between the two parties in this House. The moment he takes the Chair to preside over the deliberations of this House he is supposed—and I hope the supposition will not be a vain one—to be absolutely without politics.

It is said that he will not be able to take part in any political fight. In this I hope he will not follow in the footsteps of his predecessor, who did not scruple to take part in any political fight although occupying the position that the hon. member for Dorchester is going to occupy. But I believe that, if the electors of Dorchester are in the same frame of mind that they were in at the time of the general elections in 1911, they will be very much aggrieved when they hear that the young man to whom they gave their entire confidence then, and who was pledged to obtain in this Parliament the repeal of the Naval Service Act, will henceforth make no effort in that direction. Henceforth not a word will be heard from the hon. member for Dorchester against the Naval Service Act.

Mr. PUGSLEY: What will the Government do without him?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: I do not know, however, that the position which he is about to occupy will change his attitude very much in this respect because the hon. member for Dorchester is entitled to the compliment that the moment he came into this House where he happened to sit upon the side of the Government, his views on the Naval Service Act underwent a very severe change. If my memory serves me, one of the first things the hon. gentleman did after he entered this House was to give notice of a Bill to repeal the Naval Service Act; but I am not aware that he ever presented such a Bill. I think he made one inquiry, whether it was the intention of the Government to repeal the Act or not, but as yet they have not done it. Be this as it may, whatever the change of heart of my hon. friend may be, it is apparent that henceforth he is to allow the Naval Service Act to be applied without being able to

[Sir Wilfrid Laurier.]

utter a word against it. I give credit to my hon. friend for having had a change of heart in this respect, and if he again goes before the electors of Dorchester he will understand that after all the straight path is the best, and that it is better in Opposition as well as in Government to do the best that is to be done for the country.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: I entirely agree with one of my right hon. friend's observations, namely, that the electors of Dorchester on any future occasion will be very much of the same mind as they were in 1911, and I think—

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: Good-bye to the Naval Act, then.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: That it may be said of my hon. friend from Dorchester that he has at least made as much progress in accomplishing the repeal of the Naval Service Act as my right hon. friend did after 1896 in destroying that protection against which he made so many vows. If my right hon. friend has seen fit to introduce the subject of changes of opinion upon public questions, I can only say that my hon. friend from Dorchester has a long record to fill up before he shall be able to emulate my right hon. friend.

Motion agreed to.

ABOLITION OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT BILL.

Mr. ROBERT BICKERDIKE (St. Lawrence, Montreal): moved for leave to introduce a Bill to amend the Criminal Code. He said: I want to say that capital punishment is murder, and that it is morally indefensible in any Christian land. It is a relic of the dark, pestilential days of Nero.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am afraid that the hon. gentleman is starting on a course that will take him away from the well-understood rule of the House that a simple explanation only is in order at this stage.

Mr. BICKERDIKE: I was just coming to that, Sir. I think I am safe in saying that the time has arrived when it is the bounden duty of this Government and Parliament to give consideration to this grave question, which is daily growing in importance all over the world—

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: Not just now.

Mr. BICKERDIKE:—especially in the Christian nations. The purpose of the