

HON. MR. POWER—In that respect I am glad to say the hon. gentleman agrees with me, but that does not meet the argument. What the hon. gentleman thinks and what I think is one thing, but the conscientious feeling of the parent is another thing, and if there is any place in the Dominion where those feelings should be respected it is in this House. It is a very simple thing to require that before a boy is bound out from the reformatory the consent of the parent or guardian of the child should be obtained. If the proposed change is in the interest of the child the parent or guardian will naturally assent to it. If it is not in the interest of the child, if it is against the religious conviction of the parent, then it should not be done. I do not suppose the hon. gentleman means to say that the religious convictions of the parents should not have some little respect, even from the Government of Manitoba.

HON. MR. PROWSE—It appears to me that it is impossible for this Government or any other Government to legislate for individual cases. The same objection might be raised to almost any legislation that could be proposed. Other denominations might raise the same objection; the boy might have Methodist parents, and the parents might say: "We are not satisfied that our child should be apprenticed to anybody but a Methodist."

HON. MR. POWER—My suggestion is to meet every one of those cases.

HON. MR. PROWSE—The responsibility of the superintendent of the reformatory and of the Government does not end when the boy goes out of the institution. The Government is liable, and the superintendent is liable for the placing of that boy in proper hands. In many of those cases the boy would be much better in the reformatory for his full term rather than be apprenticed out to certain individuals, such individuals as his parents might have been, who are not competent to take charge of such a boy.

HON. MR. O'DONOHUE—It seems to me that the reformatory is a much better school for the boy than a farm. To send a boy out from the reformatory before he has received any education or training is to place him in the hands of some one

whose only object will be to get as much work out of him as possible. We, in Canada, are paying for schools all over the Dominion, and why should we, for the sake of economy in the maintenance of a reformatory, send a boy out before he has acquired some knowledge which will fit him to make his way in the world? If a boy is put in at the age of twelve or thirteen for some offence—perhaps for being ungovernable, the reformatory is a training school for him, and he receives an education without endangering his religious state, and by the time he is four or five years in the institution it is probable that he will go out into the world fit to take a respectable position. But if you send him out as a little waif, without any education at all, you leave him forever a waif. I attribute the best intentions to the framers of the Bill. I am only giving the House my impressions on this subject.

I believe that these little ones require to be cared for like all other children, and that they will be better cared for in the reformatory than if they are farmed out. Some of the farmers are, no doubt, like some people of all other classes, benevolent, and may treat such a boy as one of their own, but I have no doubt that others are tyrannical, and would force a boy to work beyond his strength and ruin him in his tender years. I do not believe in the system of farming out those boys. I think it would be better to improve our reformatories and make them good training schools. The people of this country are generously and liberally sustaining these institutions, and they will not grudge the cost of properly maintaining this Manitoba reformatory. For some time to come the population of Manitoba will not be large, and I think we can afford to educate and train these boys properly, instead of sending them out to work on farms.

HON. MR. PELLETIER—I should like to understand what advantage is to be gained by this legislation. When a parent sends his child to a reformatory it is with a view to having him reformed, and if it is thought proper to send him away from the institution, would it not be better to send him back to his parents? Is he more likely to be reformed by strangers than by his own family?

HON. MR. KAULBACH—The parents might not care to take him back.