

Minister of Justice to punish the parties implicated in contract broking to the fullest possible extent. And it is a lesson to the heads of the department in future not to place it in the power of any man of similar character to this Mr. Petit, to try and levy blackmail upon tenderers in order to secure for them a contract from which benefits would be derived. I have given my reasons, as clearly and distinctly as I know how, but I desire to impress upon the Minister of Justice that he should use every endeavour in his power, and should take immediate steps, to put a stop to this kind of blackmailing by prosecuting anyone who is guilty of writing such letters, or who attempts to exact from tenderers any amount of money in consideration of any influence which he may have with the government of the day. I go further; if this law does not cover it, I would suggest to him to submit an amendment to the criminal code by which we could reach just such people as these and have them properly punished.

Hon. Mr. GOWAN—Assuming that such a letter as has been read by my hon. friend, the leader of the opposition has been written, and assuming the facts which he has publicly mentioned to be correct, there can be no manner of doubt whatever that the person who wrote that letter has brought himself within the purview of this enactment. There can be no question or doubt upon the point. If it should turn out that the statute does not cover the offence, I am sure the government will cause the necessary amendment to be made; I know that that ought to be done. But I am not quite sure that I would be prepared to surrender what I consider the provincial rights. Now, the Minister of Justice cannot be said to be holding an office at all analogous to that of a procureur under the French system, or the public prosecutor under the Scotch system. Our constitution delegates to the general government the criminal law. It is one of the subjects over which they have power to legislate. But the administration of justice is also delegated to the local authorities, and I really myself cannot see how the Minister of Justice could, *ex mero motu*, institute such a proceeding, but the very fact that the matter has been called to the attention of the House by my hon. friend may stimulate, if it be necessary, the proper officer in the province where the

offence was committed to take the necessary steps. I think it would be the plain duty of the government here to afford every possible facility in the prosecution by allowing the papers to be used, and perhaps sending an officer with them, and doing anything in their power to assist the prosecution. But I am not prepared to say that the province should surrender even to my hon. friend—of whom I have a very high opinion—the initiation of criminal proceedings. There may be cases where special steps may be taken to bring an offender to justice, but where it is an offence of an ordinary character, I would hesitate to say that the province should surrender to the Minister of Justice the initiation, *ex mero motu*, of such proceedings. The prosecution would begin by an information being laid by the officers having the charge of the administration of justice in the province where the offence was committed, if they did their duty. It would evidently be the plain duty of the government to take steps to see that it was done, and while I am thoroughly in accord with my hon. friend, the leader of the opposition in this House, as to the enormity of the offence, and as to his duty and the duty of every right feeling man to call public attention to it, I hesitate, on the ground that I have mentioned, to admit that the general government have it within their power, or that it would be expedient, that they should initiate criminal proceedings, when the British North America Act while giving the power to them to deal with the criminal law, relegates to the provinces the administration of justice as well as the constitution of the courts. I think my hon. friend, the leader of the opposition, deserves the thanks of the community for calling attention to this, and the very fact of his having done so, in this august body, will have the effect of stimulating, as I said before, if stimulus be necessary, the local officers to whom it seems to me the duty more properly belongs.

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—I should like to ask a question of my hon. friend who has just spoken. He did not observe the form in which the question is asked. I ask "whether it is the intention of the government to take steps, &c.," not to prosecute themselves, and I instanced the case of the Connollys and also of McGreevy who contravened the provisions of this