

know that the feelings of judges, who have had such cases before them, is to suggest that some other reference should be made, and that the wife and husband should not quarrel, at the same time intimating to the husband what his legal responsibilities are, and what would be the consequence of a continuance of refusing to support his wife and children. Therefore, we need not be at all uneasy that the judges will hastily punish the husband unless there is such strong testimony as makes it clear that he should be punished—having the means at his disposal to support his wife and minor children, and wilfully refusing to do so. For these reasons, I would be disposed to believe that the amendments proposed by the hon. member from Lunenburg would remove any objection that otherwise would be made to the Bill.

HON. MR. POWER—The principle of the Bill was adopted at the second reading, I take it, and it seems to me that the committee have agreed upon one point, that is that the wife shall not be compellable to give evidence. I think it might be as well to make the amendment which has been suggested by the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill first, and then consider the other question as to whether the husband should be a competent witness or not. I agree with the hon. member from Amherst that he should, but we might make the amendment that we all agree to first.

The amendment was adopted.

HON. MR. GOWAN—Having heard what my hon. friends on the other side have said, I must say I do not think that I would be justified in resisting the proposition made by my hon. friend from Lunenburg, that some testimony in corroboration of the wife's should be heard, but beyond that I do not feel disposed to go. I think it would be unwise to allow the husband to be admitted as a witness in the matter, and I think it would be opening the door to a very objectionable practice. My hon. friend, the junior member from Halifax (Mr. Almon) seems to consider that members of the profession to which I belong are utterly incapable of forming any judgment whatever with res-

pect to the matters on which he touched ; that we have no opportunities of doing so, and that we are incapable, in fact, of forming an opinion upon them had we such opportunities. No doubt he is thinking that as certain trades render men liable to certain diseases so a certain course of life renders men liable to fall into wrong impressions on various subjects ; but with respect to the profession to which I have the honor to belong, I beg to inform him that he is quite mistaken. Lawyers have very nearly, if not quite, as good opportunities of forming a judgment as medical men. The hon. gentleman has constantly referred to matters touching members of the profession, and perhaps he has not quite studied some of the peculiarities of his own profession—an honorable profession of which, I believe, he is a distinguished member—but they occasionally fall into errors like other men. Now, I know as a fact, from reading and from my own observation, that they form certain theories—they receive a little light and get enamoured of their own conception ; they form theories and generalize them and apply them to every case. I remember, it is not long ago, that a physician pronounced every disease which came under his notice was suppressed gout. If a man had a pain in his elbow it was suppressed gout ; if a man had a boil on his back it was suppressed gout. My hon. friend the junior member from Halifax, is not exactly, perhaps, in favor of that view, that suppressed gout applies to every case, but he is quite a believer of the view that suppressed Scott Act applies to every Bill. His remarks to-day, and on the motion for the second reading of this Bill, pointed to the Scott Act, so, really, he has a certain moral disease—I say it with all respect—which is suppressed Scott Act.

HON. MR. ALMON—I wish it were suppressed.

HON. MR. GOWAN—I should like to hear the amendment, if the hon. member from Lunenburg will kindly formulate it.

HON. MR. KAULBACH—I move that the following be added to the end of the clause, "In all such prosecutions, the evidence of the wife alone shall not be sufficient as against her husband."

HON. MR. SCOTT.