

*Mr. Speaker,*

Let me begin by stating that I have no intention whatever of following the example of the member for St. Louis in seeking to jest at the members of this House who do not share his views on the bill under consideration. Today, as throughout my whole career, I respect honest opinions and sincere convictions.

AN OPEN QUESTION.

The member for St. Louis has pretended that, if the question of compulsory school attendance was left "an open question", the majority of the members would be in favor of it. Well, let me reassure the member for St. Louis. The Government does not intend to force its will upon any one. The question is an "open question", entirely free, and the members who are responsible to the people only will, I am sure, follow the dictates of their conscience as they always do. I desire therefore to simply add that the observations which I am about to make are the expression of my personal opinion only.

A PENAL LAW—AN EXCEPTIONAL LAW.

The bill of my friend, the member for St. Lawrence, tends simply to introduce into our statutes a