

Mr. CUDLIP in the chair.

The Bill was agreed to.

Hon. Mr. GILLMOR moved the House into Committee of the whole on a Bill to provide for the defraying of the expenses of the civil government.

Mr. CUDLIP in the chair.

The Bill was agreed to.

Hon. Mr. BOTTSFORD moved the House into Committee of the whole on a Bill relating to Sewers.

Mr. REVERIDGE in the chair.

The Bill was agreed to.

Hon. Mr. ANGLIN moved the House into Committee on a Bill to promote and regulate a Reformatory School for juvenile offenders.

Mr. LINDSAY in the chair.

Hon. Mr. ANGLIN said it had been considered by a great many persons in St. John that such schools were necessary. Various schemes had from time to time been proposed, but none of them had succeeded, chiefly from the want of means to carry them into effect. His Honor Judge Parker had taken a great interest in the subject, and obtained information as to the working of such institutions in England, and had laid it before the Quarter Sessions. The plans he has suggested have not been considered possible, and nothing has been done. The Bill now before the Committee was founded on a different principle to any that had been suggested here. It was almost a transcript of the Reformatory Bill passed by the Imperial Parliament, and he considered this in itself a great recommendation. Instead of being carried on as a public institution, it provides that it shall be supported by private interests. Hon. Mr. Anglin then proceeded to explain the provisions of the Bill.

Mr. KEAR asked if the juvenile criminals were to be associated with the poor, ignorant children picked up from the streets.

Hon. Mr. ANGLIN explained that it was only intended for juvenile criminals who were subjected to 14 days in the Penitentiary.

Mr. CONNELL asked if there was any petition before the House in support of the Bill. It seemed that the Government were to support it by a grant of money, and he should like some further information on the subject.

Hon. Mr. ANGLIN explained that the subject was one that had been urged for a long time—some seven or eight years,—and as to the grant, it was not compulsory, but permissive. The School would be under the inspection of the Governor and Council, and any person appointed for the purpose of inspection, and if the School was not carried on in such a manner as would prove beneficial the grant could be withheld.

Mr. CONNELL had a great objection to appropriating the public funds for such a purpose. He had watched the operations of hon. members for St. John when the Hospital Bill was up, and he noticed after the whole was got through they wanted an appropriation of £2,000. He did not know but this might be something of the same kind; at any rate, the Bill was too important to be rushed through, and he hoped progress would be reported to give members an opportunity of looking it over.

Hon. Mr. ANGLIN said there was not, nor had there been, any desire to push the Bill through. It had been on file since the first week of the Session, and hon. members could have investigated it. He had been careful to point out the provisions of the Bill, so that nothing should be passed without coming under the direct

notice of the Committee. With regard to the sectarian character of the instruction to be imparted in the School, the gentlemen who had framed the Bill did not believe in any religion which was not sectarian. They regarded it as having no existence—as a nonentity. No injustice was done to any denomination, for all could under this Bill get up just such an institution. If hon. members thought best, he was willing to submit it to a Select Committee to alter and amend it, if they thought necessary, and report to the House upon it.

Hon. Mr. WILMOT said from his knowledge of the City of St. John, he believed it necessary that some such institution as this should be established. Judges Parker and Ritchie had both taken this matter up at different times, and brought it before the notice of the Sessions, and impressed upon them the necessity of making some provision for juvenile offenders. He should like to have seen a measure that would have included all denominations; but as there appeared to be little prospect of this at present, and as the case was a pressing one, he was in favor of its being referred to a Select Committee to report upon it.

Mr. KEAR thought the Bill was entirely of a local character. In no other country than St. John would sufficient juvenile offenders be found to warrant the establishment of such an institution. And even if it were not so, no country could at any rate afford more than one, and that according to this Bill, must be under the religious instruction of one denomination. And then to take an offender who had been sentenced to 14 days imprisonment and put him in a Reformatory for five years, looked very much like placing a tax upon the country for its support. He saw that the Bill was very important, and that all the Province would be affected by it. He admitted the general principles of the Bill, but it should be very carefully guarded. He would like to know if the Bill had been laid before the Sessions.

Hon. Mr. ANGLIN said it had not; but so much had been said and done, that certain parties in St. John thought it ought to be brought before the House. Many of the difficulties had been removed, and they were ready to go to work at once and put up a building; but without the passage of the Bill they would have no power to retain the children. As to the support of the Government, it was entirely free to be given or withheld, and if that was considered an objection, rather than have nothing done, he was willing to allow that section to be struck out.

Mr. CONNELL asked if the subject of establishing a Reformatory had not been before the Sessions, and if this building were put up to what denomination would it belong.

Hon. Mr. ANGLIN said the Sessions had had it under their consideration, but had not been able to agree upon any plan by which it could be carried out. It was well to have everything plain and above board, and he would say that this Bill emanates from the Catholic body of St. John. The hon. member for Carleton seemed to be afraid that a building which had been erected in St. John was to be used for this purpose. He could assure him that no such thing was contemplated. There was one provision in the Bill which he had forgotten to mention, and that was, the parents of those children placed in the School would be liable for a certain portion of their support, and could be sued if they refused to pay. The Bill in its character was not local, but provincial;

but it was denominational, as without a course of religious instruction, it was believed no improvement could be looked for. The difficulty with the Sessions had been chiefly that they thought the country ought not to provide the funds, and were afraid the Province would not. He was quite willing to allow progress to be reported, so that members could read the Bill and consider its provisions. He did not wish to smuggle it through the House, for it was an object of the greatest importance that these poor unfortunate children should be saved from a life of crime, and that the community should be relieved of them.

Mr. CORAM said it was time something was done in this matter. The police reports of Saint John show that the number of juvenile offenders is continually increasing, and he thought it was a great wrong that children of tender age, who had been brought up in vice and crime, should for some small offence be put in the Penitentiary to become hardened by contact with old offenders. He saw no objection to children being trained and instructed in the religion of their forefathers, and nothing in the Bill that should prevent its going through. He was in favor of progress being reported that members might look into the Bill and be in a position to carry it through the House.

Mr. WETMORE endorsed the ideas of the hon. member for Saint John; but the hon. member for Carleton (Mr. Connell) seemed to think that because there was no petition it was therefore hardly worth while to go into the matter. The hon. member had not probably seen the police court of Saint John. There, frequently, boys of from eight to twelve years of age were arraigned for trifling offences, (but which the law regarded as larceny, and, therefore, the Magistrate could not overlook) and were sentenced for different periods to the Provincial Penitentiary. If the Magistrate made the penalty light on account of the circumstances in which they were reared, and the influences by which they were surrounded, they were sure to be brought up again and again. The Penitentiary was a very bad school to teach boys to reform, for there they were thrown in contact with men of the worst character, who had committed the vilest crimes. The hon. member was afraid there was something sectarian in the School proposed to be established; he would ask the hon. member if he was ready to proscribe the Roman Catholics?

Mr. CONNELL.—No, but let it be known by what denomination the School is to be carried on.

Mr. WETMORE would put it to the hon. member if he was willing to prevent the Protestants moving in the matter? He thought the step a very laudable one, and one that reflects credit on the Catholics of Saint John for taking the initiative in a matter of so much importance. He was sorry the Protestants had not moved before, but he hoped they would do so now. The hon. member for Northumberland (Mr. Kerr) appeared to be alarmed lest the country should crumble to pieces on the mention of money grants, but he was sure that money could not be better employed than in such an undertaking. All that other denominations would have to do, was to subscribe funds and put up a building, to have a Reformatory too. He had frequently heard both Mr. Justice Parker and Mr. Justice Ritchie speak in the strongest terms of the necessity for such a reform school, and he was glad that steps were taken to do something for these poor untrained boys.