

He only wished for the colonies of France, where *récidivistes* were to be sent, that the same state of things existed. As to numbers, the total number of *récidivistes*, which had in 1856 been only 40,000, had risen to 75,000 in 1880, or nearly double; but 5,000 was still the probable number that would come under relegation in the first years, for, although there would be some 20,000 criminals to be dealt with, only 5,000 would have to be relegated. The great cities, Paris and Lyons, had been said to demand the Bill; but it was the country-folk who (though with less noise, perhaps) demanded it most. The question of cost must not stop the Senate: but it had been overestimated; for the expense of *récidivistes*, if kept in France, must be taken into account. Then, as to the place of relegation, he admitted that an answer must be given to M. Bérenger's criticism. There could be no question of choosing Corsica or Algiers. At a later period of the debate it would be easy for him to show that it was not colonies that were wanting; for, on the contrary, some could be immediately named. As to a *régime* of restraint, the reason for asking that regulating powers should be given to the Executive was that it would be futile to lay down any programme at once: the *régime* must be one capable of easy modification, very elastic, and subject to revision after experience. In like manner the exaction of forced labour required a whole executive mechanism, which could not possibly find its place in clauses of a Bill.

6th February.—The debate was resumed by M. de Gavardie. The Bill had originated in the threat of Gambetta at Belleville, "We shall know how to find you in your lairs." The Bill would cost sixty million francs to carry out. Every juriconsult of any authority—M. Lucas, M. Desjardins, M. Picot, M. Chevrier—had pronounced against it. It was one that could never be carried out. As to numbers, the Government estimate was 5,000; but the Committee's was now 21,000, and the report went as high as 60,000. Even 60,000 was not certain; it might perhaps reach 100,000. It would certainly not be less than 24,000, and 30,000 was probably the lowest. The evidence of the Governor of Guiana was alone sufficient to show that the scheme could never be carried out. As to the cost the Finance Committee had admitted the impossibility of estimating it, even at 5,000: what would it be if the number was 30,000?

M. Schœlcher said that the fact of the Committee having proposed to strike out the word "colonies" proved how questionable they thought the policy of choosing any colonies at all for the relegation; yet the Minister had said in yesterday's debate that it was precisely colonies that ought to be chosen. New Caledonia was already full. Guiana was the only colony that could receive any of the *récidivistes*; yet every one who knew Guiana united in objecting to its being chosen. Throughout the debates in the Chamber of Deputies it had been declared that the *récidivistes* were to have absolute liberty. Now the Minister had wisely renounced so baneful a proposal. Neither reason, right, nor equity allowed the mother-country to inflict such an evil upon her colonies. New Caledonia objected as strongly as Guiana, and the delegate of that colony [*délégué au Conseil Supérieur des Colonies*] had protested in the name of the colonists, on the ground that New Caledonia was already afflicted by the scourge of the *libérés*; and what would become of it if to this scourge were added bands of incorrigible malefactors? Why destroy colonies that were developing themselves gradually by free immigration? Why should not the *récidivistes* be sent to the sparsely-inhabited but fertile islands of the New Hebrides?

M. Labiche described the changes now proposed in the Bill. There had been originally two fundamental conditions. The first was, that the *récidivistes* should be left in absolute liberty: it had been asserted in every page of M. Gerville-Réache's report, and confirmed anew in the debates, especially by the Minister of the Interior (M. Waldeck-Rousseau) himself. The Committee had decided against leaving the criminals at liberty: they had acknowledged it to be a utopian idea to send 5,000, 10,000, 20,000, 30,000 criminals to a colony to be free. The silence of the Bill about the suppression of that liberty did not permit it to be suppressed by mere Executive regulation. As to the argument that the prodigious development of Australian prosperity was due to transportation, the contrary had been demonstrated. The hopes of the Minister of the Interior were only generous illusions. Let the Senate study the appendices to the Committee's supplementary report. The Minister had spoken of employing the *récidivistes* upon farms, in working forests, in keeping sheep. It was to be wished that he had studied better the evidence and the documents laid before the Committee. The *récidivistes* would not be employed upon farms, for there were none; nor in keeping sheep and cattle, for there were none; nor in any forestry work, for there was none. The cardinal innovation now made by the Committee was the abolition of this "state of liberty." There could be no doubt of what the Chamber of Deputies had intended. He might recall the words of M. Gerville-Réache, and the Articles published by M. Leveillé, but it was enough to quote the Minister's own declaration, "Liberty was the right of the *relégués*." Upon this declaration the Chamber of Deputies had voted; it was incontestable that the Chamber's Bill was based upon it. Not being able, in face of the evidence before them, to share the illusions of the Chamber, the Committee had not hesitated to say, "No more liberty," and had expressly substituted for it a state of forced labour. Now, deprivation of liberty and exaction of forced labour were things too grave to depend on mere Executive regulation. The Committee did not prohibit relegation to French colonies; they contented themselves with not imposing it. As for the cost, the most competent judges had told them that, while it was easy to *intern* 1,000 men, the cost must be tripled for 2,000, and multiplied ten times for 4,000.

M. de Verninac (Reporter) pointed out that the speech of M. Labiche was not an explanation but a condemnation of the Bill, and M. Labiche must be understood as having expressed his own individual opinions, not those of the Committee.

M. Waldeck-Rousseau (Minister of the Interior) said that the course taken by the debate made it necessary for the Government to give a clear explanation on several points. The Committee proposed to enact in the first section of the Bill that relegation was to consist in perpetual *internement* in some place not named. Then where was it to be? The Government wished to give a fair hearing to the protests of the colonies; but the colonies had been told that 5,000 criminals were to be thrown on their shores in a state of complete liberty, and that they were to be subject to an in-