

sentence all *récidivistes* to it, whatever might be their character and antecedents. This compulsory feature of the scheme had been greatly objected to in the Chamber of Deputies. Its result would be to exile for life many who had not really become a danger to society. Then, as to the clause providing for permits to leave the place of relegation. Any conditions might be sought for in vain in the Bill on which these permits were to be granted. Was the criminal to be allowed to return to France? The Bill said nothing on that point, and discretion was left absolutely to the Governor of the colony. Now, there ought to be no place in such a measure for caprice. Another clause enabled the Government to give *récidivistes* within the colony all or some of the civil rights they had lost by their convictions: under what conditions? What proof of repentance or amendment was required? No one knew. The Government did not say what the *régime* was to which the *récidivistes* were to be subjected. According to what had passed in the Chamber of Deputies, they were to be free; and certainly both law and justice were opposed to their being detained as prisoners. Then, what was to be done with them? How were they to be made to work? If there were good reasons for not putting details on these points into the law, at least the Government ought to state their own intentions. More than a year had elapsed since the Chamber had passed the Bill, and it had even been a long time before the Senate. Surely the Government could now divulge the leading features of the *régime*, and say what the *récidivistes* would be constrained to do, what their rights would be, and how they were to be made to do any work. For, after all, it was very difficult to admit, *a priori*, that the same men who would do nothing in France would submit themselves with good will to work hard in a colony. The Senate ought to be told what were the means proposed to make them work. The silence of the Government was inexplicable; there had been ample time to lay down the chief lines of the regulations to be made. Then, as to the place of relegation. Phu Quoc and the Marquesas being given up, the Government had fallen back on New Caledonia and Guiana. He had himself no serious objection to New Caledonia, for the climate was very healthy. Probably there would not be room for the 15,000 or 20,000 *récidivistes* who would be sent there in the course of a few years; but he (Admiral Jauréguiberry) thought the colony might take about 2,000, on condition, however, that these were masons, carpenters, locksmiths, and so forth, tradesmen who were wanted there, and would be able to get work. Indeed, if the colonists could be induced to give up some of the measures they had adopted, a larger number than the 2,000 might perhaps be sent. Labour was so much wanted in New Caledonia that the colonists had been compelled to recruit native labour in the New Hebrides. But these natives had been nothing else than slaves, under the disguise of another name; and so much evil had resulted that the authority to recruit had been withdrawn in 1882. The colonists had, in fact, been told that, after all, New Caledonia was a penal colony, that they must submit to the conditions attached to that type, and that they ought to employ, if not the convicts, at any rate the men who had served their time (*libérés*). At that time there were 3,500 *libérés* absolutely idle, refusing to do real work, who were housed and fed by the Government: there were no means of making them work. They would work up to a certain point, but for this they asked wages which the colonists could not pay. So the colonists had given them up, and recruited for the labour in the New Hebrides. But so much disturbance had taken place when New Caledonia had been recalled to its duty, that lately the Government had been obliged to yield and re-establish the New Hebrides' recruiting. That was a great evil; and, if the colonists had been compelled to pay fair wages to the *libérés*, without allowing them to have recourse to savages who were all-but slaves, and had been brought from the New Hebrides without knowing what they were doing, there would have been more room for the *récidivistes* now. Both the *récidivistes* and the *libérés* must now be made to work: yet Government was without any power whatever to compel either, although the *libérés* were deemed much guiltier men than the *récidivistes*, for whom the Bill was intended. So much for New Caledonia. He knew very well that a conquest of the New Hebrides had been spoken of, in order to use the islands as a place for relegation or transportation; but they were tied by treaties which prohibited such a conquest: and, besides, there would be many difficulties in the New Hebrides themselves. The Admiral then discussed Guiana, which he also condemned as a place of relegation: and advised a reconsideration of the proposed law.

M. de Lareinty said that every one seemed to think only of the scoundrels whom it was desired to get rid of, instead of the colonists who had carried the French flag to her colonies. For his part, he held that the money and solicitude of France ought to be given to honest men, rather than be spent in providing country houses for every rogue who was to be got out of France. Let not the Senate deceive itself about the cost. If they were prepared to spend what was really necessary to employ the men properly, well and good. The colonies of France were not to be limited. It was all very well to say that some were "impossible;" presently it would be seen how others were very possible. They had now a great colonial expansion before them: they were about to conquer a portion of the world; and they might have other places of relegation.

M. de Verninac [Committee Reporter] criticised the last speeches, especially on the compulsory character of the Bill. It was easy to give instances where the law would be really severe. But it was not enough to fix the principle of a law; the question was, how it was to be worked. Now, for a criminal to incur relegation there must have been, except in certain cases, not only two, nor even three, previous convictions, but four. And for what offences? theft, swindling, breach of trust, public outrage to modesty, excitation of minors to debauchery. Could it be supposed that men who had four times committed such offences were not really incorrigible? Could they inspire much pity? But it might be said, since these criminals were incorrigible, the Judges were sure to inflict the relegation; why, then, make it compulsory? The answer was, that the only way to make the law exemplary and useful was to inscribe in it the certainty that, after a given number of offences, it would not depend on any one to prevent relegation. So long as a hope was left to the criminal of escaping that fate, so long as he did not fear the certainty of it coming to him, so long would he only use all the skill produced by prison life to evade any repression at all.