

February 1906

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

*THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON,) Dundee*

deprecatd bringing this matter forward as an Amendment to the Address, digesting that a better opportunity of discussing it would have offered on the Navy Estimates. He would now, however, make the statement he had intended o make then, and he hoped the Amendment would be withdrawn after the hon. Member for Donegal had heard the sympathetic reply which he was in a position to make on behalf of the Admiralty. The question was, as a matter of fact, dealt with by the Admiralty on January 30th last, a date implying an intelligent anticipation of events, in a circular addressed to the officers commanding squadrons, stations, and fleets.

The circular, which was headed "Summary Punishments—**Birching and Caning**," ran as follows—

My Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, having had under their consideration the regulations governing the **summary punishment of boys in the Royal Navy, have decided that the award of Punishment No. 20 Birching, as prescribed in Article 759 of the King's Regulations and Admiralty Instructions (Article 789 in the revised edition) shall be suspended, both for Boys and Youths under training, and for those nerving afloat until further orders.**

At the expiration of twelve months a confidential report is to be forwarded by you as to the disciplinary effect of this order on the station under your command.

My Lords further direct that **punishment No. 21 Caning shall be inflicted only under the actual order of the captain of the ship**, and that the regulations respecting the delegation of punishments to the executive officer shall be regarded as modified in this respect.

The above decisions of Their Lordships are to be communicated by you confidentially to the commanding officers of His Majesty's ships and establishments under your command. He hoped that his hon. friends would find his answer a sufficient justification for the withdrawal of the Amendment.