

it is not because I believe there is any difference, but because I am more certain of it since it has been legally interpreted and I would rather abide by the existing clause, even if it should be considered an anomaly, than change the section even for a wording that on the face of it would seem to indicate precisely what the law is to-day and that is free from the anomaly which exists in the present Act. So far as I am concerned, the committee may choose either section. There are different views on both sides of the House, and it is entirely a matter of how it is regarded. Essentially, I do not think there is any difference between the two. I would incline towards allowing the clause to stand, but it is not a matter of any vital moment in my judgment.

Mr. CARVELL: Do you mean as it stands reprinted in the Bill?

Mr. WHITE: As it is in the old Act.

Mr. KYTE: It appears to me that the only effect of the change that has been introduced in the new section is to save the consciences of good Christian bank directors. That is how it appears to me. As the law stands at present, it states specifically that banks shall not charge more than seven per cent. However, they have been able to get round it by virtue of the decision of the Privy Council.

Mr. BENNETT (Calgary): They did it long before that.

Mr. KYTE: They prefer to have the sanction of law for getting round it, and this amendment is introduced, not with that intention—I do not want to attribute that to the Minister of Finance—but it has the effect of easing the consciences of those bank directors who do not like to stand before the world as wanton violators of any public statute.

Mr. OLIVER: I desire to suggest to those who favour the reprinted section that after the word 'upon' in the last line on the top of page 49, there be inserted the words, 'not in any case to exceed' such and such an amount—eight, nine, ten, fifteen per cent, or whatever the committee think fit to fix. It seems to me that if we can impose a limit which shall be as high as the committee sees fit to make it, it will protect us against usurious interest and will have the effect of showing on its face what Parliament means.

Mr. BENNETT (Calgary): You cannot do that. You might put something in at the end of the clause stating that when a Bill is discounted it shall show upon its face what the rate is. If upon the face of every Bill taken by a bank for discount

there shall appear: Being at the rate of... per cent per annum, I think a great deal of the difficulty would be overcome.

Mr. OLIVER: That would not be controlling the matter; that would be merely giving information.

Mr. BENNETT: But if the information is given in a great many cases the conscience hardly exists to charge twenty per cent per annum.

Mr. OLIVER: I would like to suggest to the minister the placing of these words in the present section, and if that is not acceptable I desire to move specifically that the section be stricken out.

Mr. SHARPE (North Ontario): With reference to the suggestion of my hon. friend the Minister of Finance that this section should be accepted by the committee, it seems to me that it is a question in effect and practice as to whether the wording of the old section or the new section is the more acceptable. The position I take is simply this. If we increase the rate, or if we allow a bank to stipulate for any rate it may agree upon with the customer, we will have critics, like the hon. member for Edmonton (Mr. Oliver), going before the electors and saying that the bank, under the old Act, was bound to charge not more than seven per cent, but the Government have opened the gates and allowed the bank to make any rate it likes.

Mr. OLIVER: No, the hon. member for Edmonton does not talk any such nonsense as that. It is in North Ontario that that kind of thing is heard.

Mr. SHARPE: We have had a lot of criticism from the hon. member for Edmonton to-night, but we have not had any constructive suggestion from him. The hon. gentleman lacks the courage to state what the rate should be. He has never stated to the committee what, in his opinion, the rate should be in the West. The onus will be upon the Government if they change this clause and make it different from the provision contained in the old section. My reason for stating that is simply that the Government will be open to criticism for increasing the rate if they adopt the suggestion of the hon. member for Edmonton, who has not the courage to state what he thinks would be a fair and reasonable rate.

Mr. OLIVER: The hon. gentleman is using expressions that he is not entitled to use.

Mr. SHARPE: I do not want to be discourteous to the hon. gentleman. I asked him a question a while ago which he an-