

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: A little way, perhaps. It is true that pretty wide powers to create offences are given, but certainly not without precedent.

The phraseology respecting the expiry of the Act is a little unusual. As a rule, measures of this kind have no termination date; they remain in force until they are repealed. Some of the statutes in which a terminal date appears are laconic in that regard: they specify that termination shall be at a certain date, which may be amended by parliament if it so desires. In this bill, however, a new procedure is provided: the Act shall terminate at a certain time unless, upon addresses of the Senate and the House of Commons, the Governor in Council orders that it be continued in force for a further period. The purpose of this provision, as explained to me, is that the government wishes it to be clearly understood that at a certain date the legislation shall be reviewed if it is proposed that it shall be continued.

Hon. Mr. Vien: Otherwise it will come to an end.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: Or it will come to an end. By this section they tell the people of Canada and us in this legislature that one year from next July either they will not act or they will act. Either the measure will then expire, or, if it is to continue, we shall have an opportunity to voice our opinions and to consent to its continuance. I do not see how anybody can object to that course. Perhaps some question could be raised as to the length of time before the Act can be reconsidered; but after all, it is less than two years.

In my opinion no harm will result from this measure. Some people hold the opinion that borrowing has been resorted to rather too freely of recent years. I cannot imagine that anybody will be denied an essential commodity by reason of the administration of this Act. It may make it a little harder to buy diamonds or radios or washing machines. It may in some cases compel people to save their money until they have the funds to buy something they require, instead of buying first and then starting to pay off their indebtedness, including interest and other charges. A person is rarely injured by having to make a larger deposit or to repay his debt at a faster rate. On the other hand, many people will be benefited by restraints upon too ready borrowing and running into debt. Most of us have learned to our sorrow in the course of our long careers that debt is not a desirable thing; yet of recent months we as a people have gone far in that direction.

Let me give some figures from a statement compiled by the Bureau of Statistics.

As to cash sales, the figures are as follows:

	per cent
Increase 1st quarter 1948 to 1st quarter 1949 ..	2.3
Increase 1st quarter 1949 to 1st quarter 1950 ..	4.0

Although there has been a very desirable and satisfactory increase in cash sales, it has been moderate in the past two years.

Now, let us take instalment sales. As to these the statement shows:

	per cent
Increase 1st quarter 1948 to 1st quarter 1949	12.3
Increase 1st quarter 1949 to 1st quarter 1950	26.9

Honourable senators will notice that there is here an increase in instalment sales of 26.9 per cent. That is very important, and it is too big a percentage to laugh at.

On the other hand, as to charge accounts, where payments are either made immediately or perhaps at the end of the month, the figures show the following increases:

	per cent
Increase 1st quarter 1948 to 1st quarter 1949 ..	3.5
Increase 1st quarter 1949 to 1st quarter 1950 ..	3.0

Here the increase is very slight as compared with the total amount of increased volume.

Let us then compare the days' credits that were outstanding at the end of this year with those outstanding at the end of last year. On March 31, 1948, there were 141 days' credit outstanding on instalment purchase accounts. In other words, at that time on all instalment contracts in Canada there was an average of 141 days remaining in which payment was to be made.

Hon. Mr. Nicol: How much of that was for consumer goods?

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: That was all for consumer goods.

Hon. Mr. Nicol: How do you know?

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: They are instalment purchases, and I understand, because the Bureau of Statistics was dealing with consumer goods when gathering these facts and figures.

Hon. Mr. Aseltine: Might not houses or farms be included in that?

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: I do not think so.

Hon. Mr. Nicol: Or farm implements?

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: I am always ready to be corrected, but I do not think so. I have no authority for saying so too dogmatically, but I am pretty sure that that is not so. I have stated that the number of days outstanding on March 31, 1948, was 141. On March 31, 1949, the number of days outstanding was 170, and by March 31, 1950, the number of days outstanding had increased to 200. That is to