

of some benefit; but if not, perhaps the matter ought to be postponed until it has been more considered, and until some practical suggestion can be made that will tend to reach the result we seek.

Mr. MACLEAN. This proposition, to my mind, is meddlesome, and is not in line with the spirit of the times. I do not believe that we ought to be making additional laws for the collection of small debts; I believe that we should here, and especially in the provincial legislatures, rather pass legislation that would abolish these laws. As between two individuals, if a man has his goods and another man comes to him and asks him for these goods on credit, the man who owns the goods can protect himself while he has them in his possession, and he should not ask society to join him in collecting the debt, if he wishes to take the risk of disposing of those goods without cash payment. The curse of the day is the ease with which people get into debt, and if merchants and others understood that they were the guardians of their own goods and could not use society and the courts to collect their accounts, they would be much more careful in giving credit, and to that extent the public would be protected. All over the country we see that the principle of paying cash for goods is the only sound principle, and it is those merchants who sell for cash and do not give credit who make money; it is the man who gives credit that loses money. If the cash principle is coming into vogue more and more every day, then our legislation ought to be in the direction of encouraging people to buy for cash, and discouraging those who give credit. In the province of Ontario we have had a great deal of discussion about that matter, and, as far as I can gather, the trend of public opinion in Ontario is against the Division Court and the harshness with which the law is enforced in connection with it. I would like to ask the hon. gentleman (Mr. Richardson) who introduced the Bill, if it applies to the money under the control of Parliament out of which the indemnity of the members and the salaries of the officers of the House of Commons are paid?

Mr. RICHARDSON. Why, certainly.

Mr. MACLEAN. But the Bill refers only to moneys in the hands of the Government.

Mr. RICHARDSON. I meant that it should apply to all.

Mr. CAMERON. The salaries of the Ministers of the Crown, and Senators, and everybody else.

Mr. MACLEAN. Then, this Bill, as it is worded, does not apply.

Mr. BERGERON. The members' indemnity is not attachable by that Bill.

Mr. MACLEAN. Then, how do we appear before the country in respect to this

matter? Here we have a Bill which says that the indemnity of the members and the salaries of the servants of this House are not attachable, but which says, on the other hand, that the salaries of those servants who are paid out of the Consolidated Fund, are attachable. This is legislation of a wrong kind. It is not in accordance with the spirit of the age, and we ought not to encourage it here, but should send the matter to the local legislature, where it belongs.

Mr. PENNY. Mr. Speaker, I cannot enter into the legal points of this Bill, as has been done by the hon. member for Laval (Mr. Fortin) and the hon. member for Kingston (Mr. Britton), but I should like to put before the House the question from the merchant's standpoint. It has been found that some civil servants—I am glad to know not all of them—have taken advantage, and in many instances criminal advantage, of hiding behind the law as it is at present, to get out of paying their just debts. I ask, why should any one member of the community be favoured more than another? The ordinary citizen or the ordinary merchant's clerk is bound by law to pay his just debts, and the law can force him to do so, and I ask, why should any other man be screened in order that he may by a technicality avoid paying what he justly owes to his fellow-citizens? The civil servant is far more favoured than the ordinary merchant's clerk. He gets his salary on a certain day, and he knows he is sure of it, whereas the merchant's clerk in some instances has to wait several days; and, therefore, there is no reason why the civil servant should not pay his debts as they become due. The hon. member for East York (Mr. Maclean) has argued that the merchants should not give credit. Under ordinary circumstances I strongly condemn the credit system; but, as every one knows, exceptional circumstances may arise, under which a man may desire credit for a week or two; but that is no reason why he should be given advantages over his fellow-citizens. I represent a constituency which is composed to a very great extent of retail merchants, and I can say that one and all of them heartily endorse the principle of this Bill. In some instances, when they have gone to collect the debts due them, they have been met with the grossest impertinence and arrogance by civil servants. I ask, is this a proper state of affairs? I do not think any hon. member of this House will say that it is. Now, I wish it to be distinctly understood that I do not class the whole civil service in the category of those who wish to shirk their honourable responsibilities, because that would be very wrong. I am sure the great majority of the civil service of this country are above such contemptible practices; but there are in the service those who bring discredit upon their colleagues.

Mr. SOMERVILLE. I wish to say a word or two in commendation of the at-