

GEORGE T. SMITH RELIEF BILL.

THIRD READING.

The Order of the Day being called, Third Reading Bill (98) "An Act to confer on the Commissioner of Patents certain powers for the relief of George T. Smith,"

HON. MR. MACINNES (Burlington) moved—

That the Bill be not now read the third time, but that it be amended by inserting after "acquired" the words "by assignment, user, manufacture or otherwise."

The motion was agreed to, and the Bill, as amended, was read the third time and passed.

CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

HON. MR. ABBOTT moved the second reading of Bill (65) "An Act further to amend the Criminal Law." He said: This is a somewhat comprehensive amendment to the Criminal Law, applicable to quite a large number of the subjects to which the various Acts in the Revised Statutes apply, some of them of a very important character indeed. The first division of the Bill, which is subdivided under headings applicable to the different Acts in the Revised Statutes of Canada, applies to escapes and rescues, and more particularly to escapes and rescues from and in respect of reformatory prisons, reformatory schools, industrial refuges, industrial homes, or industrial schools, with regard to some of which there was no provision at all before, and with regard to others of which the provision is improved. The second division applies to offences against public morals and convenience, and these make very considerable changes in the Criminal Law in this respect. I think it probable that when this Bill goes into committee, I shall propose some further amendments to that chapter of the Revised Statutes, and some amendments to this Bill as it stands. There are one or two things in it which, I think, will hardly meet with the approbation of this House, and I propose to ask the Senate to change them. There is a question of age, which I think is objectionable, and probably when the Bill goes into committee, we may find it necessary to alter that.

The provisions, however, which it contains are very important indeed. They afford a large additional measure of protection to a class which meets with public sympathy in the greatest possible degree, young girls of immature years, who are peculiarly subject to temptation and even to outrage: in those respects the protection afforded by this Bill is very much increased. The age at which consent may be given is raised to a more reasonable one, and the punishment of outrages upon this class of persons is made more severe and the crimes are better defined, and therefore more easily punished. I think when we come to consider the details of this chapter we shall find it a great improvement in the criminal law, and I hope when we come into committee that the House will be prepared to accept, or at all events to discuss with indulgence, the amendments which I propose to offer. The third chapter is mainly devoted to the prevention of an evil which seems likely to encroach upon us, that of Mormon polygamy, and it is devoted largely to provisions against that practice. The next chapter is an amendment of chapter 162 of the Revised Statutes and applies to offences against the person. It is similar in its bearing, in many respects, to the second chapter, to which I have already referred, and deals with analogous subjects. In these amendments, also, the age of consent is put upon a more reasonable footing, the offences are better defined, and some additional provisions are made to protect those helpless children and young people from the kind of outrage provided against in this chapter. The next chapter has reference to malicious injuries to property. There is no great alteration in this chapter: there has been some attempt at further precision of definition, and the offences against boundaries are somewhat extended and better defined, and so with regard to the next chapter respecting threats and other offences. The main change which this chapter makes in the existing law has reference to combinations. Under the law as it stood, it was doubtful whether an agreement amongst workmen not to work was not a criminal conspiracy, punishable by criminal indictment as a misdemeanour, and as that is not the policy of the country or the general tendency of its laws, this chapter will prevent the possibility of such prosecutions as that. Of course it is pretty