

Mr. Baldwin: The other question relates to the same clause. There was some discussion between the minister and the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) on the question of the provinces having adopted views along these lines and incorporating them into legislation. Has there been any discussion among the provincial ministers with regard to provincial governments changing their sale of goods act or comparable legislation in order to permit a breach of this particular clause? Such matters are, of course, punishable under the Criminal Code. Nevertheless has there been any thought of permitting a breach of this provision to be regarded as being ground for a civil action for damages, for cancellation of a contract, for setting aside a contract, and so on?

I recognize that this is entirely within provincial law, but it would seem to me that it is an avenue which might be pursued. It is one thing to punish a man for doing what is wrong, and another to put a provision in a bill requiring that a certain thing be done. In addition to that, let us consider the remedy of the person who is suffering. There may be some doubt about what the federal government could legislate. There have been instances, to which I can refer, under the Criminal Code where provisions were included which in effect dealt with civil offences. I am not suggesting that the minister consider doing that. I am suggesting that he might pursue that question in a reasonable way with the provinces and urge them to ensure that their own codes dealing with the sale of goods and automobiles provide that this sort of offence would vest in a person who has been wronged the right of cancellation or rectification.

Mr. Basford: The remarks of the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) are well taken. I think he is correct in assuming that under the federal Weights and Measures Act, which is clearly based on the federal jurisdiction over weights and measures as specified in the British North America Act, we could not determine the rights between vendor and purchaser of a motor vehicle, and of course we have not purported to do so. Nevertheless, I think that his remarks, in so far as they were directed at provincial governments and at my making suggestions to them, are well taken. That is why two of the provinces have already regulated this matter. I know that one other is definitely intending to do so, and possibly more may do so.

• (9:00 p.m.)

Also, and in a more general way, many of the provinces are considering complete revision or amendment of their sale of goods acts, a turn of events which comes about because of the amendment made by this Parliament to the Bills of Exchange Act last June, which became effective November 1 last, where we said with respect to the rights of a person signing a promissory note that those rights travel with the note even if it is sold and passed to an assignee a holder in due course.

As the hon. member and I both said in the House last June, this measure opened the door to the provinces to revise their own laws relating to the sale of goods, and contracts between vendors and purchasers. Some of the

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provinces have already gone through that door. In my own province of British Columbia the Attorney General has introduced amendments to the provincial sale of goods act. As a result of a conference on consumer affairs held last November in Toronto, I know that a number of other provinces are thinking along the same line.

I would join with the hon. member for Peace River in urging the provinces to revise these laws because many of the laws relating to the sale of goods had their origins in days when people were buying horses and buggies, rather than automobiles, refrigerators, stoves and all the things a modern family buys. Many of our laws were written in those old, old days and now we need new laws. This is what my department is all about. So far as the federal department is concerned, we are endeavouring to write those laws and introduce those reforms in Parliament. The same thing needs to be done at the provincial level, and I think the question asked by the hon. member for Peace River is a very valid and proper one. He asks me to urge the provincial governments to revise their laws relating to the sale of goods. I hope he will join me in doing so.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. Members: Question.

Motion agreed to and bill read the third time and passed.

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GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION ACT, 1970

PROVISIONS RESPECTING DEPARTMENTAL REORGANIZATION, MINISTRIES OF STATE, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES, ETC.

The House resumed consideration in committee of Bill C-207, respecting the organization of the government of Canada and matters related or incidental thereto—Mr. Trudeau—Mr. Honey in the chair.

The Chairman: Order. When the committee rose at five o'clock this afternoon clause 14 of the bill was being considered.

On clause 14—*Establishment of Ministries of State.*

Mr. McCleave: Mr. Chairman, the message that I—

Mr. Drury: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Chairman. Just before we adjourned for dinner the hon. member for Halifax-East Hants suggested it was time the House entered into a debate on housing and said there would not be an opportunity, once this bill was passed, adequately to discuss housing problems.

I agree with him wholeheartedly that housing is an important problem, and indeed on a number of occasions this Parliament has paid considerable attention to it. One of the purposes of this bill, as outlined by the Prime Minister, is to make it possible to establish a ministry of state responsible for urban affairs and housing, in the hope that we will have a rather more elaborate, rather