

I hope this Bill will meet with the approval of the House as it has met with the approval of the Legislatures in many of the States and as I believe it has the approval of the people generally.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. Is this the Bill which was introduced last year?

Mr. BURDETT. Yes.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. I forget what the fate of it was last year.

Mr. BURDETT. You intended to bring in some amendments to the criminal law. I was unfortunately ill at the end of the session and was unable to be here, and the Minister of Justice did not deal with this measure. I think it was to have been incorporated in the criminal law amendment, if the Minister of Justice approved of it.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. I remember now that I was introducing a Bill amending the criminal law, and intended to refer that Bill and this one to a committee, but the hon. gentleman was unfortunately not able to be here. I think the Bill is a good one. The only objection is the preference it proposes to give. We are endeavouring to pass a criminal law amendment Bill which will probably be dealt with by the House, but, if the hon. gentleman thinks this measure is urgently required, I will not persist in objecting to its passage.

Mr. BURDETT. I know that there is a person now charged with attempting to commit some of the frauds at which this Bill is aimed. They are attempting to reach him through another clause of the criminal law. I would suggest that the hon. gentleman should allow the Bill to pass, and, when he does codify the criminal law, he should incorporate this provision, or something like it, in his measure. I know this is of paramount importance to the people of the County of Hastings and the adjoining County of Prince Edward, and I think the Minister of Customs will agree with me in that.

Mr. DAVIES (P.E.I.) Is this a copy of the law in force in the United States?

Mr. BURDETT. Yes; of the law in the State of Ohio.

Mr. CAMERON (Huron). I am glad to hear that the Minister of Justice approves of the principle of this Bill, and I hope he will allow it to become law this session. I understand that he does not intend to proceed this session with the Bill for the codification of the criminal law, and I, therefore, hope he will allow this Bill to pass. I know that the frauds which have been spoken of by my hon. friend prevail to a considerable extent in the west. The only objection I have to the Bill is that it does not cover a great many other cases, but it does cover a very extensive class of frauds; and if the Minister of Justice is in favour of the principle, I hope he will allow it to pass the second reading, refer it to a special committee if necessary, and by the strong arm of the law stamp out a class of frauds which is very prevalent.

Mr. BERGIN. I think this is a very valuable Bill, and will be productive of much good, but I agree with the last speaker that it should take a wider range and include other articles which are being sold in a most fraudulent way by which people are being robbed every day. I hope the Minister of Justice will allow this to go through this session.

Mr. SPROULE. It seems to me that there might be some conflict of jurisdiction between this measure and the provincial laws in reference to contracts, but, if it were possible to frame a Bill which would not interfere with the provincial legislation, I think it would be very important that this Bill or some other provision of the kind should become law at an early date. It is patent to every member, especially from the rural districts of Ontario, that a certain class of individuals are going around every year victimizing the farmers and taking their hard earnings and giving little or nothing in return. If a law of this kind were put in force, I believe the passage of it would have a good effect. These people are careful not to go into towns and villages but to keep to the rural districts where they are not likely to be detected by those who understand the law better. I think there were thousands of dollars taken out of East Grey a few years ago for seed grain. One year it is seed grain, another year it is implements, and so on, but the fraud is carried on almost incessantly and the farmers are being victimized by unprincipled men. I think, if it were possible, this Bill should go further, and that manufacturers who sell agricultural implements should be prevented from taking a lien of such a character that prevents the farmer from disposing of any portion of his stock until that lien is disposed of. If the farmer sells a horse, if he has bought a mower or binder or reaper, the manufacturer has a lien, with such provisions that the note becomes due at once, though it may not be properly due for a year, and the purchaser of the horse may be sued at any time and the note collected from him. While it may be true that many manufacturers will not take advantage of this provision, I think it should not be left in their power to do so, and the notes which are given out at present by manufacturers to their agents for signature by the farmers are a disgrace to any civilized country. There is no reason why the manufacturer should have a lien on all the property of a farmer, when perhaps the value of his purchase may be only \$14. I think the law should prevent the manufacturer from having the power to do that. I would not abrogate the section itself, but I would prevent manufacturers from taking a lien upon a man's property that would prevent him selling that property to advantage when necessary.

Mr. McMULLEN. I desire to say a word upon this subject. Hon. gentlemen will remember that during the last Parliament one of the members from Hamilton (Mr. Brown) asked for a committee to enquire into frauds practised upon farmers. I happened to be a member of that committee, and the member for Brockville (Mr. Wood), whom I do not see now in his place, was also a member of that committee. We took up something like six weeks in the investigation, and although we were aware in our individual experience of the frauds committed in the several sections of the Dominion from which we came, we were surprised to find how general they were in all sections of the country, and I am quite certain that the interest taken by Mr. Brown at that time in finding out the existence of those frauds led to the introduction of this Bill. I think it is fully time that we should have such a measure. I quite agree with the remarks dropped by the hon. member for East Grey (Mr. Sproule). There are enormous frauds practised in