

Somebody said the other night that I had been speaking with a good deal of pathos—I do not just know what was meant by that—about the man who got stung by accepting a bad cheque and that a man does not need to take a cheque unless he likes. How long would a man stay in business who refused all cheques? That is a very poor argument. What about the pathos, if you call it pathos, in regard to the general public?—because it is the general public that pays in the long run. It does not matter whether it is a boarding house or hotel or store or bank who is first robbed, it is the general public that pays, because the amount is added to the cost of doing business; I do not see the pathos of it. There is undoubtedly an insistent demand for legislation of this character. My chief hope when I introduced this bill was to start a discussion in the house and the country. Then I hoped, when the attention of the country was drawn to the matter and influential pressure was brought to bear on the government, they would see their way on an occasion like this to say that if I dropped the bill they would take it up this session or another session when they were bringing in an amendment to the criminal code. That would be satisfactory to me. Otherwise I would suggest that the bill be allowed to receive its second reading and be sent to the committee on banking and commerce if the house so desires.

Hon. HUGH GUTHRIE (Minister of Justice): May I have the indulgence of the house to answer my hon. friend's last suggestion? I quite agree with him that the evil is one which should be remedied. I am sorry that I cannot see the remedy in this bill, and I believe if it be passed in its present form it will defeat the object of my hon. friend who has introduced it. I contemplate bringing in some amendments to the criminal code during the present session. I do not know that I can include the subject matter of the bill, but it is worthy of our best consideration and some clause should be drafted which would provide against an evil that has grown to enormous proportions in Canada and in other countries.

What I said when I spoke before was that this bill rather opened than shut the door. At present if a man issues a cheque upon a bank in which he has no account he may be found guilty of obtaining money under false pretences. Under this bill he will not; he will have a reasonable time within which to cover the amount of the cheque. In this bill there is an invitation to a reckless man to issue cheques in the hope that he will

be able to adjust the matter satisfactorily at a later date. The law as it stands to-day is more stringent. I believe, however, the law in respect of worthless cheques is defective and some remedy should be applied, but I do not think the remedy lies in my hon. friend's bill. If he is willing to drop his proposal, I will undertake to have the matter carefully considered in the department in the hope that later a clause may be drafted which will cover the matter.

Mr. NEILL: With that assurance I would ask leave to withdraw the bill.

Bill withdrawn.

CANADA SHIPPING ACT

On the order:

Resuming debate on the motion of Mr. MacInnis for the second reading of Bill No. 45, to amend the Canada Shipping Act.

Mr. MacINNIS: The last time this bill was up for discussion the Minister of Marine (Mr. Duranleau) adjourned the debate. As I do not see him in the house this evening, I think the bill had better stand.

Bill stands.

BANKRUPTCY ACT AMENDMENT

PRESENTATION OF PETITION IN LOCALITY OF DEBTOR

The house resumed from Tuesday, June 9, consideration of the motion of Mr. Brassat, for the second reading of Bill No. 42, to amend the Bankruptcy Act as respects locality of a debtor.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is the house ready for the question?

Motion negatived.

CANADA SHIPPING ACT

Mr. W. G. ERNST (Queens-Lunenburg) moved the second reading of Bill No. 97, to amend the Canada Shipping Act.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to the select standing committee on marine and fisheries.

CIVIL SERVICE ACT AMENDMENT

PREFERENCE TO CANADIAN VETERANS RESIDENT IN CANADA FIVE YEARS

The house resumed from Tuesday, June 23, consideration in committee of Bill No. 18, to amend the Civil Service Act (returned soldiers' preference)—Mr. Boulanger—Mr. LaVergne in the chair.