

touch generally upon the two clauses thereof, and state the reasons of public interest that are behind each of them. The first clause aims at preventing employers of labour, either in person or through their agents, from employing on their works or premises any man or men who carry arms. A proviso to the clause safeguards the watchman, who has a license to carry weapons, as provided for by section 118 of the Criminal Code. As general principles are more easily understood when illustrated by concrete cases, I will take, as an example, the riots and bloodshed that marked the troubles in Buckingham a few years ago. There we find a man armed and employed by a company to protect its property, apparently, but really to enforce its impositions on the discontented workmen. That armed man fired and killed one of those connected with the strike. What has been the sequel? That same man; only a few weeks ago, in Montreal, broke into a house, shot at a woman, killed a child, fled from justice, and, when about to be arrested, shot himself dead. Imagine, now, the arming of a character of that kind, and employing him to move about, revolver in pocket, amongst unarmed and unoffending citizens. But some authority must decide when and where it is needful, in the public interest, to arm employed men, or to employ men so armed, upon the works or premises where other men are employed. This Bill leaves the onus of such decision upon the Attorney General of the province wherein such works or premises are situated. He is the lawful guardian of the peace in the province, and upon him rests the responsibility of according the permit without which no employer shall be able to legally employ any armed man or men.

I pass to the second clause of the Bill, which deals with the detectaphone, a new contrivance whereby conversations or deliberations may be recorded and made public afterwards. You can readily see how much the private character, the personal business, or the most intimate deliberations of any man, or any body of men, may by means of this instrument be exposed to violation and injury and ruin perhaps in some cases. The use of the detectaphone unless legally restricted is a menace to society; no man is safe, no family is secure, no organized body is safeguarded, as long as such means of detection and revelation are in existence. The cause relative to the matter has been most carefully drawn.

[Mr. Verville.]

It deals in the first subsection with the use of such contrivances for the purpose of injuring the character of any person or the disclosing of the deliberations of any body. Just let us suppose that in a Masonic Lodge, or Council of Knights of Columbus, or an Orange Lodge, or a C.M.B.A. Council, or even in the Privy Council, over which the Premier presides, such an instrument were made use of—where would be the secrets so jealously guarded from those who have no right to obtain them? I need but mention the case to have it clearly understood without the necessity of any more elaborate explanations. Subsection 2 deals with the publication of the records of such detectaphones or similar instruments. As in the instance of the employment of armed men so in this case, the Bill leaves to the Attorney General of the province the power to accord the necessary permit allowing such publication, and he becomes the judge as to whether or not such publication is in the general interest of the public. I am fully aware that this detectaphone is used by lawfully authorized persons for the purposes of detecting crime and frauds; and to make it clear that we do not desire to interfere in any way with the prevention or punishment of crime, the third subsection most clearly states that nothing in this section shall be held to prevent or restrict the use of the detectaphone or other like contrivance in the detection of crime or fraud. With a pistol or other weapon a man may maim, would, even kill another person; but with the detectaphone he can destroy another's life, good name, character and future; he can bring ruin upon whole families, disturbance into communities, strife between neighbours; he can render impossible the carrying on of social affairs; he can do injury to any lawfully organized or constituted body in the country; he can militate against the liberty of the subject—in a word, it is questionable which of the two, the revolver or the detectaphone, is the more deadly menace to society.

This brief statement or explanation will, I trust, suffice at this stage of the measure. When the Bill is printed and distributed hon. members of the House will have ample opportunity of studying its details and its construction. I am convinced of the vital importance of placing on the statute-book restrictions such as this Bill provides.

Motion agreed to, and Bill read the first time.