

in this parliament, so far as we have the power—and we have certain powers in regard to contracts let by the government—we should do all that we can to further that end. I believe in the principle that the machine should be the slave of man and not man the slave of the machine; I believe that a man should have not merely an opportunity to live but that he should have an opportunity to live happily; and that he cannot have if he is oppressed by excessive hours of labour. We were told by the hon. member for Cumberland (Mr. Rhodes) that even if this measure had the effect which the hon. member for Toronto (Mr. Macdonell) said it had, he was prepared to vote for it. Now, the hon. member for Toronto (Mr. Macdonell) said that the measure was altogether impossible and therefore the position of the hon. member for Cumberland amounts to this, that he is prepared to vote for a measure which is altogether impossible. Well, Sir, I am not prepared to vote for any measure of that kind. I do not believe in trying to humbug the working people of this country.

Mr. RHODES. I rise to a question of privilege. I said nothing which could by any stretch of imagination be considered as humbugging the labouring men of this country, and I object to that language coming from the minister. I mean to stand by every word I said in this House with respect to this measure. What I meant was that if this measure has the effect of causing the eight hour day to be introduced generally, then I am heartily in favour of it, because I believe in the eight hour day as a matter of principle.

Mr. KING. I am just taking the hon. gentleman's words as I put them down, and as I think a reference to 'Hansard' will show that he gave them. The words were: 'Even if this measure has the effect which the hon. member for South Toronto says it will have, I am prepared to vote for it.' Every hon. member knows that the hon. member for South Toronto said that the Bill was altogether impossible.

Mr. MEIGHEN. The hon. member for South Toronto, in describing the measure as impossible, described its effect. Referring to the effect of the Bill, he said that it extended to cases where men had contracted to supply goods to the government. The hon. member for Cumberland (Mr. Rhodes) referred to the effect, not the characterization of the Bill.

Mr. KING. I am quite prepared to leave it to the House to decide what the hon. member for South Toronto meant when he referred to the Bill as altogether impossible. The impression which I certainly got, not only from that particular remark, but from the whole tenor of his speech,

Mr. MACKENZIE KING.

was that he, like myself, was prepared to support a measure which would really do something effective, but that he was not prepared to stand up in this parliament and say that he would support any measure when in his heart of hearts he felt that it would really do no good to the people on whose behalf it was proposed. And, in view of what has been said this afternoon, I feel that we cannot consider too carefully the question as to whether this measure is likely to do what the hon. gentleman who has introduced it hopes that it may do.

In so far as the Bill relates to the hours of labour on public works, I would like to point out that this government has already taken considerable steps towards meeting the object which the promoter of this Bill has in view. In 1900, the Hon. Mr. Mulock, now Sir Wm. Mulock, introduced into this House a resolution in favour of the payment of fair rates of wages to working men engaged on public works and the enforcing of the hours of labour current in the district where the work is carried on. Since that time the government has endeavoured to see that that resolution has been faithfully and fully carried out; and in all its contracts the government has caused to be inserted a clause requiring the contractor to pay fair rates of wages and to give the workmen employed by him the hours of labour current in the district where the work is carried on. The government has not relied simply on the safeguard of a general provision of this kind, but has appointed special officers, known as fair-wage officers, whose duty has been to go to the locality where any public work is to be carried on and prepare in advance a schedule of rates of wages and hours of labour, to which the contractor is required to agree before the contract is awarded.

Mr. HUGHES. May I ask if that is the case on all public works of the government?

Mr. KING. I understand that it is.

Mr. HUGHES. Quite the contrary. I can give you the cases. For instance, right in the town of Lindsay, on the government work of building the locks there, the men are not paid even the ordinary street wages.

Mr. KING. If that is the case, I am unable to understand how the representative of that district has allowed that condition of affairs to go on and never brought it to the attention of the government.

Mr. HUGHES. I will answer the hon. gentleman when he is through.

Mr. KING. Every member of this House knows, or ought to know, that that resolution was passed, and every member of this House knows, or ought to know, that it is part of his duty to his constituents to see that if a resolution passed by this House is