

## APPENDIX No. 4

not enforced after the election apparently. In 1869 President Grant found it necessary to issue a proclamation that 'no reduction shall be made in the wages paid by the government by the day to such labourers, workmen, and mechanics on account of any such reduction of hours of labour.' This proclamation apparently did not altogether bring about the desired results as it was necessary to re-issue the proclamation in exactly the same form three years later. In the same year an opinion of the Attorney General declared that the terms 'labourers, workmen and mechanics' should be broadly construed to include all persons employed and paid by the day. March 30 1888, another Act was passed explicitly directing the public printer to apply the provisions of this law to all the employees in his department. By an Act of May 28, 1888, eight hours was declared to be a day's work for letter-carriers in cities, but overtime was not forbidden.

## SCOPE OF EIGHT-HOUR ACT OF 1892.

The next step was taken in 1892 when the main Act which is now in force was passed, this extended the eight-hour provision to contractors and sub-contractors on public works. Up to this time it had applied on paper only to those in the immediate and direct employ of the government. It also extended the scope of the law to include the District of Columbia and its contracts as well as the federal government proper, and made provision for effective enforcement by imposing penalties. No workman, mechanic, or labourer within the scope of the Act could be required or permitted to work more than eight hours a day, except in extraordinary emergencies.

The CHAIRMAN.—Mark the Act as an exhibit and it can be printed along with the evidence. (*See Exhibit A. (2).*)

Mr. MACDONELL.—Have you got in handy form the last Act of which you have spoken by which the government restricted labour on their own public works to eight hours?

## THE FEDERAL ACT OF 1892.

Prof. SKELTON.—Yes, that is the one to which I referred. I have it here. It is very brief and I will read the essential parts of it.

The CHAIRMAN.—Read the whole of it.

Prof. SKELTON.—I will read the whole of it then; it is quite brief. (Reads):

'Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,—That the service and employment of all labourers and mechanics who are now, or may be hereafter employed, by the government of the United States, by the District of Columbia or by any contractor or sub-contractor, upon any of the public works of the United States or of said District of Columbia is hereby limited and restricted to eight hours in any one calendar day; and it shall be unlawful for any officer of the United States government or of the District of Columbia, or any contractor or sub-contractor whose duty it shall be to employ, direct, or control the services of such labourer and mechanic, to require or permit any such labourer or mechanic to work more than eight hours in any calendar day, except in cases of extraordinary emergency.

'Sec. 2.—That any officer or agent of the government of the United States or of the District of Columbia, or any contractor, or sub-contractor, whose duty it shall be to employ, direct, or control any labourer or mechanic employed upon any of the public works of the United States or of the District of Columbia who shall intentionally violate any provision of this Act shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanour and for each and every offence, upon conviction, be punished by a fine not to exceed one thousand dollars or by imprisonment for not more than six months, or by both, such fine and imprisonment in the discretion of the court having jurisdiction thereof.'

The third section of the Act declares that it shall not apply to pending contracts. Mr. MACDONELL.—Is there any other exception than the emergency exception?