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Research and Legislation.

The attempt made in connection with the bill for an eight-hour day for laborers on government contract work to provide a basis for legislation in the results of investigation at competent hands is a commendable departure. Professor Skelton, of the University staff, was charged officially with the task of investigating other legislative enactments on the same subject and the working of these, his findings to be embodied in a report for those responsible for shaping the bill for the House of Commons. This is a practice that should be allowed to develop. Too often legislation is blind and strikes in the dark. It is all emotion and no intellect, which is to say that it is sensitive to the influence of interests, bears the impress of its passage through the lobby, is shot through with strange purposes, but knows not the touch of the mind that is acquainted with laws and principles and facts that apply to it. Research on economic and industrial subjects is being carried on regularly by men connected with universities and employed by governments. Every nook and cranny of these wide regions has reflected light from the torch of investigation. The effect of tariff schedules on cost of articles affected has been minutely studied; causes of depressions have been sought out; monetary and banking systems have been examined; corporation and railway finance have revealed their hidden meaning to investigators; different aspects of the movement affecting labor have had their origin and history recorded. The result of such activity is the accumulation of a splendid body of data. An indirect result is the firm establishment of the habit of research. Legislators have no longer an excuse for working in the dark, in ignorance of facts and of indications of the probable results of their proposals. Research into pertinent facts and the working of legislation similar in its nature form the best basis for new legislation along many lines. Eight hour day legislation particularly lends