

## EIGHT HOUR DAY FOR SMELTERMEN

Second Reading of Bill Unanimously Passed in Legislature

### DEBATE ON WAGES PAYMENT BILL

Amendment to Compensation Act Is Rejected—Taxation of Small Farmers and Canneries

The unanimity of the members of the house in regard to the passing of the second reading of the bill entitled "An Act to Regulate the Hours of Labor in Certain Industries," a lengthy and somewhat spirited debate on a bill entitled "An Act to Amend the Workmen's Compensation Act" were some of the features of Thursday afternoon's session of the provincial legislature. These enactments were all of a character directly affecting the workmen and the premier and members of the government, in the course of the discussion, explained their attitude towards the respective proposals very clearly and, in most instances, at some length. There also was considerable debate on the assessment act amendment bill, amendments being introduced by Messrs. Hawthorthwaite and Brewster proposing further reductions in the taxation on the small farmers and on cannery establishments in British Columbia of less capacity than that defined as "one line" canneries. The debate on the house adjourned, Mr. Oliver having the floor.

Prayer by Rev. Dr. Campbell opened the proceedings and immediately thereafter the usual orders of the day, namely the presentation and the receiving of petitions, was proceeded with. A number of questions also were asked and answered.

#### Question of Privilege

Before a regular business was taken up, Mr. Hawthorthwaite rose to a question of privilege drawing the attention of the house to an incident which had occurred at a meeting of the railway committee held in the forenoon. He explained that one of the members had asked for an adjournment in order that certain of those present might be enabled to attend a government caucus. He did not think that a committee meeting should be broken up at will by the majority for the purpose of allowing matters of concern to the government to be discussed. For his part if that sort of thing were continued he would have to resign.

#### Premier's Explanation

The premier gave an explanation of the matter. He stated that on Wednesday he had made investigations and found that there were no committees related to the railway committee and so notices were issued to government supporters to attend a caucus. Subsequently he attended a meeting called to the fact that the chairman of the railway committee had called that body together and he had given assurance that there was no intention on the part of the government to do anything which would be an interference with committee work.

#### Regulation of Labor

"An Act Regulating the Hours of Labor in Certain Industries" was introduced for its second reading by that member. In his opening remarks he pointed out that the measure had been brought before the provincial legislature some two years ago and had then been defeated by a considerable majority. Later it had been submitted by a member of the house, on which occasion it had almost become law. The object of the bill was to give men working in the smelters an eight-hour day. Mr. Hawthorthwaite spoke in favor of the conditions of those employed in smelters contending that in many instances men were forced to work between thirteen and fourteen hours a day. He outlined the position of the employers and the employees and the former endeavoring to obtain as much as possible from their men at the same applied vice versa. He argued that if the capitalist class was able to exercise a power over the workmen the latter would be exterminated. He said that in connection with the laborer was unmercifully "exploited." The latter were expending from day to day their strength and power. The average life of the worker should be forty years if he labored an ordinary day. He wished to point out that business men had a direct interest in the measure under discussion. It was always asserted that any workman's enactment was going to injure the industry which it most directly affected. He wished to give his assurance that nothing of the kind would occur if the bill which he had introduced became law. It would not interfere detrimentally with the smelting industry of the province. In connection with the eight-hour measure which was introduced, had been bitterly opposed. It, however, had been the result of its enforcement was not injurious to the coal mining business. He appealed to members on both sides of the house to make the bill the law of the land.

Mr. Hawthorthwaite hoped to see fair play between man and man though he did not propose "firing off the fire works" to which the previous speaker had even expressed support. He proposed supporting the bill because he represented a constituency in which the industry engaged in was to some extent a monopoly. He wished to point out that the majority of the smelters of British Columbia were working their men eight hours a day. He did not see how the introduction of the measure would hurt the industry.

Mr. McInnes spoke strongly in favor of the bill. He acknowledged that the majority of the smelters already had adopted the eight hour system and that there were some arguments which could be advanced against the measure. But he thought that there could be nothing brought forward which would tell against the necessity for some such enactment as that which was under discussion.

The premier then made some observations as to the position which he had assumed during the past few

years on the question. The records of which would show that when a measure of the kind had come before the legislature on a previous occasion he had opposed it. His course then had been guided by several reasons. They were that such a law at that time would have created industrial disturbances, would have resulted in the establishments directly affected losing financially to such an extent that they would probably have had to cease operations and, in addition, it had been found that the managements of such concerns were doing everything possible to keep close within the four corners of the legislation sought. But the attitude which he had assumed in the past seemed no longer necessary. It was no longer imperative that the government should stay its hand. According to reports the smelters all over the province were prosperous, the returns showing that the industries which were principally concerned were now on a paying basis.

In the tour which he had recently made of the interior of the province he had found the mining industry, and the smelting branch of it in particular, in a flourishing condition. And he had discovered also that those who were engaged in these industries were operating under an eight-hour system in almost every case. In short, the industry in such a state now that he did not believe that the legislation before the house was a character of such a nature as to do serious mischief. In conclusion he wished to say that he would always do everything in his power to better the condition of the workingman where it was possible to do so consistently. Therefore he was in support of the second reading of the bill.

#### Mr. Macdonald Pleaded

J. A. Macdonald, the leader of the opposition, was pleased to see that the premier had learned something of the interior. He contended that he was now taking the position which he had assumed some year ago. He did not think himself that the conditions then would have been forced down upon them. Then the prices of mineral were about half what they were at present and any such legislation as was proposed would have threatened the mines so seriously that many, doubtless, would have been forced to close down. Therefore the workingman would have been injured just as much as the industry. But a year ago the conditions were the same as now was the case. On that ground he contended that the government should have waited a year. However, he was pleased to see that the administration was prepared to lend the measure its support.

#### Payment of Salaries

The adjourned debate on the second reading of the bill entitled "An Act to Amend the Workmen's Compensation Act" was next introduced, the premier having the floor. He followed the remarks made by the honorable member for Newcastle in his introduction of the measure.

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#### McPhillips' Attitude

Mr. McPhillips announced that he would not support the second reading of the bill. He was pleased to find the leader of the opposition state that the words referred to had not affected the interests of the industry. He would add that, as far as his experience was concerned, he had found that almost all compensation had been paid under the act. He drew attention to the fact that there was a difference between the British Columbia and the other provinces. He stated that the former an advantage over the latter in the matter of compensation. He stated that the measure it would be found that the word "solely" was used in reference to the degree of the responsibility of the employer in the particular accident for which he was asking compensation. It was almost impossible to find with the view of making the employee "solely" responsible, and so he was generally given the benefit of the doubt. He stated that the House then divided, the motion that the bill be read a second time being defeated by a vote of 12 to 21.

#### Assessment Act

On consideration of the bill entitled "An Act to Amend the Assessment Act, 1903," Mr. Brewster moved to amend the bill. He moved to amend the "Section" of chapter 53 of the statutes of 1903-4 is hereby amended by adding the following words as subsection 22:

"(22) All permanent improvements up to the value of \$1000 made on lands used for agricultural purposes and to re-number the other sections of the bill.

#### Brewster's Amendment

Mr. Brewster stated that the object was to get fairly before the legislature the matter of taxation upon agricultural lands. He said that the proposal to amend the taxation upon agricultural lands should be investigated. An amendment such as he suggested would be beneficially affect many of his constituents. He hoped that the government would see its way clear to support his amendment.

#### Finance Minister's Reply

The Minister of Finance in reply outlined the position of the pre-emptor and the homestead laws. He stated that the exceedingly liberal terms of detail upon which these people were dealt with. He did not think that to find himself in a position to pay some tax on the land would be a hardship. The wild land taxation was small, while the taxation upon improved land was only a little over 1/2 per cent. He said that the assessments had really been reduced as far as was possible. His contention being that the poorer class of settlers were sufficiently well protected.

#### Opposition Leader's Position

Mr. Macdonald supported the measure, although he thought that in its present form it was too sweeping. That, however, might be remedied in committee. The most objectionable feature of the bill was that it was too sweeping. He stated that the measure would be a hardship upon the small farmer. He stated that the measure would be a hardship upon the small farmer. He stated that the measure would be a hardship upon the small farmer.

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ture, in his opinion, was the provision which penalized employers failing to comply with the regulations. He pointed out that often the employer was labor was not uniform and he did not think that, under such circumstances, he should be forced under penalty to impose upon the life of his man upon the date specified. He was of the opinion that in that regard, the scope of the bill might be broadened.

#### Workmen's Compensation

The adjourned debate on the second reading of the bill entitled "An Act to Amend the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1903" was taken up by the attorney general who stated that the words which it was proposed to strike out had been law for the past five years. He did not think that it could be shown that their effect had been a hardship upon employees. In his opinion he had found the mining industry, and the smelting branch of it in particular, in a flourishing condition. And he had discovered also that those who were engaged in these industries were operating under an eight-hour system in almost every case. In short, the industry in such a state now that he did not believe that the legislation before the house was a character of such a nature as to do serious mischief. In conclusion he wished to say that he would always do everything in his power to better the condition of the workingman where it was possible to do so consistently. Therefore he was in support of the second reading of the bill.

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#### Another Amendment

Mr. Hawthorthwaite then moved to amend Section 2 by adding after the word "whereof" the words "and by inserting after said words 'timber lands,' in said eighth line, the words 'and timber lands' and upon an estate of the assessed value of two thousand dollars and under."

Mr. Hawthorthwaite hoped that the amendment would be well received by those occupying seats on the government side. He stated that he had seen thousands of farmers who were unable to dispose of their produce. On behalf of these men he desired to

give utterance to a protest. The government had promised that it returned to power they would reduce the taxation upon farmers. He suggested that assessment should be placed upon the tax that had been paid by the owners of the C. P. R. upon Vancouver Island. He thought that they had remained exempt long enough.

#### C. P. R. Lands

The Minister of Finance referred to the C. P. R. lands upon the island. He pointed out that it would be impossible to tax that property without the most gross repudiation. With reference to the reduction of taxation, he reiterated the statement that no stone had been left unturned in the framing of the act to protect the interests of the small farmer. Take an average property of 1000 acres, the minister asked, and would be found that the total assessment amounted to something like \$8. By the change which the amendment proposed, the reduction upon amount of land mentioned would be \$1000 or thereabouts.

Mr. Williams expressed the stand assumed by Mr. Hawthorthwaite. He stated that a division being taken, the motion to amend the bill was defeated by a large majority.

#### Cannery Taxation

Mr. Brewster next moved an amendment as follows: "To amend subsection 50 of the act so that the following words thereto: 'Provided, that whenever a salmon cannery has not completed its equipment, such as is commonly used in a well-equipped cannery, the personal property of such cannery shall be assessed at its actual value.'"

Mr. Brewster pointed out that a small cannery, one establishing upon a prime five line, would be taxed upon a \$10,000 plant. This would be on a basis of that amount, as the minimum rate of taxation, and when it came to a well-equipped cannery, the personal property of such cannery shall be assessed at its actual value.

#### Denial of Statement

The Finance Minister, answering Mr. Brewster, stated that the government was not in placing a minimum rate upon other properties or industries. Upon canneries this would amount to \$8. He stated that the government was not in placing a minimum rate upon other properties or industries. Upon canneries this would amount to \$8. He stated that the government was not in placing a minimum rate upon other properties or industries. Upon canneries this would amount to \$8.

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#### The Government's Policy

The premier then made a few remarks upon the question of taxation generally. He explained that the government was not in placing a minimum rate upon other properties or industries. Upon canneries this would amount to \$8. He stated that the government was not in placing a minimum rate upon other properties or industries. Upon canneries this would amount to \$8. He stated that the government was not in placing a minimum rate upon other properties or industries. Upon canneries this would amount to \$8.

#### Farmers' Prosperity

In respect to the farmers, he was glad to say that the majority were enjoying prosperity. He stated that the government was not in placing a minimum rate upon other properties or industries. Upon canneries this would amount to \$8. He stated that the government was not in placing a minimum rate upon other properties or industries. Upon canneries this would amount to \$8. He stated that the government was not in placing a minimum rate upon other properties or industries. Upon canneries this would amount to \$8.

#### Veterinary Association

Mr. Hayward then introduced the amendment to his name on the order of the day. He stated that the government was not in placing a minimum rate upon other properties or industries. Upon canneries this would amount to \$8. He stated that the government was not in placing a minimum rate upon other properties or industries. Upon canneries this would amount to \$8. He stated that the government was not in placing a minimum rate upon other properties or industries. Upon canneries this would amount to \$8.

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#### Questions and Answers

Mr. Hayward asked the Hon. the Chief Minister a question. He stated that the government was not in placing a minimum rate upon other properties or industries. Upon canneries this would amount to \$8. He stated that the government was not in placing a minimum rate upon other properties or industries. Upon canneries this would amount to \$8. He stated that the government was not in placing a minimum rate upon other properties or industries. Upon canneries this would amount to \$8.

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tion (a), (b), (c), (d), and (e) of section 50 of the Statute of 1903, being the Statute of the Land Grant Act, 1903, Amendment Act, 1903? The following answers have been given: (a) 1000 applications were made. (b) 1000 applications were made. (c) 1000 applications were made. (d) 1000 applications were made. (e) 1000 applications were made.

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