

that resulted in the creation of the Department of Labour and in the enactment of remedial legislation of various kinds; and this happened many years before Mr. Bennett himself awoke to the imperative necessity of a reform policy on the eve of a general election.

Mr. BENNETT: What date is that?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: January 12.

Mr. BENNETT: This year?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Yes, this year.

Some hon. MEMBERS: The new order.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: The Montreal Gazette is not the only Conservative organ which has recorded the part I have taken in these industrial matters and in the matter of legislative reform. I might quote many comments, but upon this occasion I shall confine myself to only one further extract. I now refer to the Ottawa Evening Journal of January 18, 1935. This is not a reference to something which has happened on the eve of an election; it finds its place in that column of the Journal which goes under the heading "Ottawa 25 years ago." Quoting from the Journal of January 19, 1910, it states:

Hon. Mackenzie King, Minister of Labour, introduced a bill to provide for the investigation of combines, monopolies, trusts and mergers which may enhance prices or restrict competition to the detriment of the consumer.

At that time, some twenty-five years ago, the Ottawa Journal, a Conservative organ, was recording some efforts of mine in this parliament to further investigation into industrial abuses, and the reference was as I have given it.

But that is not the first time I had anything to do with the matter of the investigation, or reforms of this kind, all of which, may I say, were in the nature of state intervention. What I am dealing with now is the charge that the Liberal party has been a party of laissez-faire, that it has not been a party of state intervention where state intervention was necessary.

I have in my hand a copy of a document which bears the imprint of the Ottawa government printing bureau, 1898. That is nearly forty years ago, and when the Prime Minister says, "If you do not want minimum wages, then support Mr. King;" "if you do not want maximum hours, then support Mr. King;" "if you are in favour of sweating, then support Mr. King"—and so forth and so forth, I think in these circumstances perhaps I am justified in pointing out to the Prime Minister and to hon. members just when I began publicly to assert in relation to Canadian government work the necessity for

state intervention. This report is headed, "A report to the hon. Postmaster General on methods adopted in Canada in the carrying out of government clothing contracts, by W. L. Mackenzie King, M.A., LL.B." That report, as I have said, was presented to the government on January 5, 1898, and that report, I may say, associated as it was with the interviews that I had with members of the government of the day, was the report that led to the adoption in this House of Commons of what is known as the fair wages resolution of the House of Commons, under which all government contracts relating to clothing, contracts with the Post Office department, with Militia and Defence, with the mounted police, and subsequently contracts in the nature of public works, all come to contain provisions setting forth maximum hours for the workers, and the minimum rates of wages that were to be paid, and the conditions under which the work was to be performed.

I shall not attempt even to mention what is stated in the report itself. Hon. members will be able to see that for themselves if they wish. I shall read, however, the concluding paragraph because it indicates whether, as a matter of fact, as a Liberal I believe in state intervention and whether the Liberal party believes in state intervention; because, remember, these reforms were introduced by a Liberal administration, the Liberal administration of the Right Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier—

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): Thirty-seven years ago.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Thirty-seven years ago, as my colleague remarks. This was my conclusion:

I need scarcely add that the existence of such conditions, apart from any other attendant evils of the sweating system, constitute emphatically in the words of your communication "sufficient grounds for government interference in order that future contracts may be performed in a manner free from all such objectionable features." The step in this direction which has already been taken by your department cannot fail to bring about a much-needed reform and be productive of great and lasting good to the industrial classes of this country.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient servant,

W. L. Mackenzie King.

May I come now to one other matter? I shall not attempt to enumerate the different instances that I might of government intervention by Liberal administrations. I shall confine what I have to say to-night to just what was referred to by the Minister of