

man—to leave him just what he is; a servant—but at the same time to ensure his freedom by leaving him sole master of the employment of his time. Now, let us enact laws to make work as agreeable as possible; let the workshop be built according to the most up-to-date plans from a sanitary point of view; built so as to afford protection against accidents; let us compel corporations to pay wages regularly to working men from one to four times a month, so as to avoid—that which unfortunately happens too often—the withholding for months of salaries which are already too small, with the object of declaring dividends; let the workmen's salary be by law thoroughly secured by first mortgage, as a first lien, day after day, upon the product of their labour; whether movable or immovable property; without the present formalities which now cause heavy losses of the hard-earned salaries of honest workmen and fathers of families; let all the highway robbers who are selling on the streets, in the newspapers or otherwise, by means of false prospectus, bogus values or watered stocks, be unmercifully jailed; let an honest margin of profit be secured to manufacturing capital, and then let the workman be admitted to divide with his employer; let an income tax be levied; let corporations and individuals be compelled to give annually to auditors appointed by the government, free access to their books, and let these auditors, after giving the employers their legal profits, apportion the workman's share and that of the people, and from that moment the war against capital, which is so intense and so spiteful to-day, will be brought to an end and the different classes of the community will deal with each other in a friendly spirit.

The great fortunes, the suddenness of which cause such rancour in the country, all necessarily come from the same source: the public funds. The indebtedness of the country figures up to hundreds of millions of dollars, and will soon be greatly increased. Take away from the circulation the whole amount, even if you lay aside the disbursement of the annual revenues, and where would our millionaires be? Since wealth is based on public money, it is therefore absolutely fair that the government and the community should have an adequate share of its profits which only exist through a concurrence of energy and good will which they themselves have directed, in which case the poor would be less poor, the rich would be as well off probably, and the community at large would be more evenly balanced.

I, therefore, most respectfully submit to the premier and this House that the best means to bring about a practical and fair settlement of the labour question would be

the appointment of a labour commission and the abolition of day labour by the enactment of the laws to which I have just referred.

By doing so the Dominion government and parliament will certainly make a great stride towards ensuring the solid progress of the country and will give a great example to other countries.

Hon. RODOLPHE LEMIEUX (Minister of Labour). Mr. Speaker, at this stage of the session I do not intend to make a long speech on the very important subject which has been brought to our attention this afternoon by the hon. member for Maisonneuve (Mr. Verville), who so ably represents the labour classes in this parliament. I must congratulate the hon. member upon his excellent speech on the subject of an eight hour day on government works. I am well aware that in the month of September last, the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada, over which the hon. member presided, adopted a resolution in favour of the principle he has propounded this afternoon. But, Mr. Speaker, let me say at once that whilst that principle appeals to the sympathy and the deep sense of humanity and social justice in every one of us, I find that there are some very grave difficulties in the way of bringing about the happy state of things which my hon. friend has advocated. Unquestionably the duty of parliament, as representing the nation, is to increase as much as possible the pleasures of the home life of every workingman and to multiply his opportunities for study, self-improvement and rest. In that connection I may recall to the House that some years ago the Department of Labour, when that department had been in existence only a few months, instituted an investigation, under the Royal Seal, on the labour problems in the province of British Columbia, and that as a result the report of the Deputy Minister of Labour, Mr. Mackenzie King, now a member of the House of Commons, highly recommended the adoption of provincial legislation in favour of shorter hours in the British Columbia mines. I am pleased to state that the province of British Columbia has adopted that legislation, and that in the mines of that great province, one of the richest in the British empire, an eight hour law prevails to-day. The same is true in the province of Alberta, where valuable coal mines have recently been opened up. But in this country, as in other countries, this question is still in the experimental stage. It has been adopted in certain industries. In nearly all the states of the American Commonwealth also there exists an eight hour law, but it has been limited to certain indus-