

Bills of Exchange Act

property and civil rights clause of the British North America Act this was a matter which they felt had to be left to the provinces. For my part I still am not convinced that the fathers of confederation had that in mind when they wrote property and civil rights into section 92, namely that that should include labour matters for all time. In fact I have read some authorities on the subject who feel the very opposite to be the case. Nevertheless I do recognize the fact that down through the years court decisions have established that labour matters do, for the most part, come under provincial jurisdiction. There are, of course, certain classes of workers, such as railway workers, for example, who do come under federal labour jurisdiction. It so happens we already have the five-day week for railway workers, as a result of the Kellock award following the strike of a year ago.

Despite the fact it is argued that hours of work are a provincial matter, I am glad to say there is such a thing as co-operation and liaison between the provincial and federal governments, and in particular there is co-operation and liaison between the provincial and federal departments of labour. I hope now that the federal government has given this lead by facilitating the five-day week for bankers, the Minister of Labour will see to it that further consideration is given to ways and means of bringing into being legislation to provide a five-day week for workers generally. We have had amendments to the constitution—

Mr. McLure: What about a five-day week for farmers?

Mr. Knowles: I would agree. As I was saying, we have had amendments to the constitution for other matters that have been thought to be solely provincial, and I am sure the constitutional barrier is one that could be hurdled if there were a will to do it.

During the last week or two references have been made in the house to growing pockets of unemployment, particularly in some parts of Ontario. A while ago I drew the attention of the government to unemployment in my city of Winnipeg amongst the carpenters and other building trades people. I asked the government to look into the possibility of going ahead with defence contracts which are already planned for the Winnipeg area. These are ancillary reasons for giving consideration to the forty-hour week at this time. The more important consideration, of course, is that a shorter work week is one way of

passing on to the workers of this country some of the value that comes from increased productivity.

I feel that this is an important matter. It is one in which workers generally are deeply interested. Indeed, when the workers across the country hear that the bank employees have joined their ranks and have secured from parliament the five-day week, they will say, "That is good; let us now have legislation which will make it possible to extend the five-day week to all workers in Canada". I believe that is what should be done.

Mr. W. G. Weir (Portage-Neepawa): I did not intend entering this discussion, Mr. Speaker, and I shall do so for only a moment or two. I guess I was brought up in the old school. When I started out the seven-day week was general. I am wondering if the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) has taken sufficient consideration of the farming industry, particularly the dairying and poultry sections of it, and those who use the horse as the source of power in their farming operations. I am bound to say that is one angle of this situation which has not been faced. While it may be very well to say that you can double your shifts or something of that nature, it certainly carries with it the implication that costs will go up considerably.

Having in mind what the hon. member for Kamloops (Mr. Fulton) said, that the cities will be affected in one way and rural places in another, I hope this thing will not be worked out too rigidly. I go along with the government in endorsing this legislation, but the point I have in mind at the moment is that many of our smaller towns have in more recent years adopted the practice of taking a half holiday each week. As the hon. member for Kamloops pointed out, Saturday is usually market day, so it means that the business centres must use some other day of the week for their half holiday or we shall run into a serious situation. It might be that the rest of the town would be closed on Thursday afternoons and the banks would be closed on Saturdays. I would hope that that particular situation might be kept in mind when the banks are arranging to carry out this new proposal.

Mr. Clarence Gillis (Cape Breton South): This bill, Mr. Speaker, does not make it mandatory for the banks to establish a five-day week. All the bill does is pave the way for the banks to inaugurate a five-day week if they so desire. There is nothing to compel them to do it. In my opinion there is no section of business in Canada that requires reorganization with respect to hours and other