

Recently, all one day, the government's Bill for providing for an eight hour day and a forty-eight hour week was under discussion in the House. This also has been conceded as a provincial matter up to the present, but it is justified as being necessary to confirm the decisions of the Washington conference back in 1926 or 1927. Since then, nearly all countries have adopted these provisions of the aforementioned conference. But since that day, with the very much changed conditions caused by the depression and unemployment still rife throughout Canada, organized labor is now asking for a five hour day and a five day week, so the Labor members in the House inform us. All these proposals, looking toward improved industrial labor conditions, while they may be all right for those who are recommending them, have a rather disturbing and disconcerting effect upon farm labor, who naturally do not see why they should have to work such long hours when there is such anxiety about shortening the hours of industry. Many farmers put in an eight hour day before dinner-time and another eight hours after dinner, and the mere talk about an eight hour day for industry, much less a five hour day and a five day week, adds to the allurements of the city and is likely to swell the movement, already too large, from the farm to the city. However, in the interests of labor who have to toil in factories, mines or such sometimes insanitary places and under even dangerous conditions, it has been found necessary in the interests of humanity, including women and children, to have specified hours of a limited character. Agriculture, however, with its extreme seasonal activities, requires to work much longer hours and, even with modern conditions and equipment, they do not seem to be able to get away from it. Indeed, the depressed nature of agriculture at the present time seems to necessitate further physical effort on the part of not only the farmer but his wife and family, almost to the point of breakdown; indeed, sometimes past that point.

It will be noted that, while the farming population of Canada will be expected to contribute their share of taxation to the unavoidable cost of these social reforms (little called for in times of prosperity), they are not to enjoy any of the anticipated benefits therefrom, owing to their legislative exclusion by the Unemployment Insurance Bill itself. I am merely mentioning these matters to show you that nearly all reforms have their counterpart and sometimes decided disadvantages. But, on the principle of the greatest good to the greatest number, reforms have come in the past, must come in the present and will come in the future, to the end of time.

It is rarely, however, that much reform is effected by anyone who has one foot in the political grave and the other vainly endeavouring to balance and reconcile his capitalistic past with the social reforms Mr. Bennett is now advocating. It is said, you know, that the leopard cannot change his spots nor the Ethiopian his skin, but R. B. wants us to believe that he can do both overnight without any thought whatever of gathering in much needed stray votes. Of course, it is conceded that history records eleventh hour conversions and 11:55 recantations, but those of us who know this particular "reformer" and something of his political past naturally "hae our doots." After all, a tree is known by its fruit and not by its blossoms and leaves of promise, and that is the best gauge of all. In any event, the glamour and temporary hope Mr. Bennett's radio addresses revived in the breasts of his downhearted followers, who had become despondent over their many provincial and by-election federal defeats, will doubtless also be followed by disillusion when they learn that, after all, it is another case of "Much ado about nothing," and the heroics of a desperate political leader with defeat staring him straight in the face.

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