

9-10 EDWARD VII., A. 1910

(6) Contracts for transmission of intelligence.

(7) Contracts for the purchase of supplies by the government, whether manufactured to conform to particular specifications or not. And added, 'and articles' after 'materials' in exception (5) above. The Bill provided further for appeal by the contractor to the head of the department making the contract, and as a last resource to the Court of Claims.

On this last page of the memorandum you will find for your convenience a summary of the various exceptions which had been added to the Bill in its progress through the American Congress.

By Mr. Macdonell:

Q. Did the various committees make recommendations, or simply pass the Bill on?—A. The most diverse action was taken. The majority of the committees of the House of Representatives reported the Bill favourably, and on three occasions the Bill passed the House of Representatives without a vote being taken. In one case a Senate committee reported the Bill favourably, and in that case the chairman went back on his action, and moved in the Senate that the Bill be reported back to the committee.

By Mr. Verville:

Q. They were sorry that they ever took any action?—A. Apparently they repented.

BILLS KILLED IN THE SENATE.

Q. The Bills were killed in the Senate?—A. Yes it was pointed out in the hearings before one of the Senate committees that the House of Representatives never discussed the measure, but passed it without a division. The incident throws some light, by the way, on the facility which the bi-cameral system of government affords for shouldering the responsibility for an unpopular act on the wicked partner in the government, but of course that is never done this side of the line.

PENALTIES PROVIDED IN THE BILLS.

By Mr. Macdonell:

Q. What was the penalty provided in these Bills for breaches of this provision? Would it void the contract, or would it be a penalty and a fine?—A. Usually, withholding payments; the amount of the penalty stipulated in the contract would be withheld.

Q. The contract was not voided?—A. No.

By the Chairman:

Q. Do you happen to know whether any penalty has been imposed?—A. Yes, it has been imposed in many cases. It is only in the last few years that the 1892 law has been strictly enforced. Very often advantage was taken of the emergency clause of the 1892 Act, to permit the contractor to escape the penalty.

THE TWO MAIN FEATURES OF THE FEDERAL ACT OF 1892.

Q. What Act is that?—A. The main legislation of the federal government of the United States is that embodied in the law of 1892, which provides practically for an eight-hour day for all workmen in the employ of the United States, no matter whether engaged on public works or not, and in the second place provides for an eight-hour day for all labourers and mechanics in the employment of contractors on public works; the term 'public works' is construed in the strict sense to mean buildings or irrigation works, or other enterprises of the same sort.

PROF. SKELTON.