

APPENDIX No. 4

from another. I just mentioned that to give to Prof. Skelton an opportunity of thinking it over because I think that point is the very basis of the whole matter.

Mr. MACDONELL.—That is why I would like to get in a clean cut way how far they have gone with this legislation elsewhere, in the States, for instance. I should judge the extent which they have gone is where the government is constructing public works, either with its own workmen or under a contract, in all these classes the work is confined to eight hours a day.

Prof. SKELTON.—I think generally speaking. There are, of course, debatable grounds. For example such as that work of dredging where it is difficult to say whether it is a public work or not; but generally speaking it applies to all buildings and constructions, including, of course, wharfs, piers and breakwaters.

The CHAIRMAN.—You could perhaps classify the field by dividing it into three parts: the clearly applicable so to speak, the debatable and the definitely non-applicable.

Prof. SKELTON.—The scope of the law, to a certain extent, will be revealed, I think, by consideration of the further attempts made by the advocates of the measure to have it amended. That will show of course to which it does not extend.

The CHAIRMAN.—Will there be any way of also indicating, in this connection, what the situation was at the time this measure was enacted, so that we may be able to know what difficulties they had to meet in this enactment? For example if the eight-hour day were prevailing, throughout the United States, when this measure was passed, we can see that there would not be much difficulty in applying it. On the other hand, if there were nine or ten hours in some states, it would have given rise to certain difficulties. Has the evidence, so far as given any place helped you towards an opinion on that point?

Prof. SKELTON.—I have not seen that point brought out in evidence, but I had already thought of the advisability of considering it and have been going through the available reports, as to hours of work in the United States which would affect this point. In that connection, Mr. Chairman, it may be necessary for you, when the committee has discussed the possible scope of the Bill before it, to have the officials of the Department of Labour testify as to the hours of labour prevalent in the employments concerned. I suppose that is your intention.

The CHAIRMAN.—Any time the committee is ready to hear the fair wages officers of the Department they will be in attendance. They have made, I think, pretty comprehensive investigations along that line and will be able to give a tabular statement.

Mr. MACDONELL.—So, therefore, when we come to deal with this matter we shall be ourselves practically in the position of those who have already dealt with legislation as to the hours of labour.

Mr. VERVILLE.—According to your knowledge of the Bill, Prof. Skelton, supposing the government were giving a contract for the construction of a building. Would all the goods furnished for that building have to be made under the eight-hour law, stone, wood or whatever it may be?

Prof. SKELTON.—I think so, if made in consequence of that contract. The ramifications of the Bill seem rather far reaching.

The CHAIRMAN.—Which Bill are you speaking of now?

Mr. VERVILLE.—The Bill which is now before us.

THE NEW YORK BILL AND BILL No. 21 COMPARED.

Prof. SKELTON.—On that point, Mr. Verville, your Bill as I understand is an exact copy, so far as it goes of the New York law. It does not go quite so far—

Mr. VERVILLE.—As the New York Bill?

Prof. SKELTON.—As the New York Bill, with one exception which I think is a printer's error. A comma has been put in, which rather importantly alters the meaning of the Bill. That, I think, is a printer's error.

The CHAIRMAN.—You might point that out.