

Mr. Taylor, M.P.

Sir,—I must congratulate you on bringing forward your Alien Bill before the House of Commons again. Hoping you will carry it through this time. At Niagara Falls and Buffalo, DeBarry has made it a misdemeanour for a Canadian to go there and apply for work.

Yours respectfully,
JAMES BROWN,
Box 46, St. Catharines.

I have also received letters from two large lumbering firms in the west. One of these is from Hamilton, and is as follows :—

Hamilton, Ont., Feb. 13th, 1896.

Mr. Taylor, M.P.,

Parliament Buildings, Ottawa.

Dear Sir,—We notice you are bringing in an "Alien Labour Bill," something on the lines of the American Alien Labour Law, and hope you will succeed in getting it through the House during the present session as it is but just and right that these laws should work both ways or not at all. We are making square and waney timber in Ohio and Michigan and could supply 500 Canadian axemen if allowed to do so, and would prefer them to the men we are forced to take over there as the Canadians are natural timber makers and the Americans are not, but we are prevented from giving a single Canadian employment on our export timber over there, while the Americans are natural saw-log men and hundreds of them are employed in Canada, particularly in the Parry Sound district, Muskoka, Algoma and Nipissing, and many of our best Canadian axemen are left home idle when we could give them employment at \$50 per month for six months of the year if permitted to do so. * * * * * Should you desire any further information, we would be pleased to furnish all the particulars that our experience has brought to our notice, and are sure every timber man in the Dominion will give you any assistance they can, as they all know the injury it is to our Canadian workmen to be deprived of the privilege of getting employment in the United States, while the Americans have free access to any employment that is going here. Hoping you will be successful in preserving for our workmen equal chance with the United States workmen.

Yours truly,
J. & W. FLAT.

I have another letter of a similar character from a firm in Simcoe, Messrs. McColl & McBirney. When I introduced this Bill, it had very few sympathisers, from the fact that the Alien Labour law of the United States had not been enforced against Canadians so rigidly as it has been in later years. The evidence collected in this report proves that in some places, particularly in New Brunswick, hundreds of Americans living in the United States come across into Canada, perform their day's labour and return at night, while not a single Canadian can go over from our side to work for a single day, and any who attempt to do so are driven home. That was the evidence brought out there, and so all along the line. I think this Bill should be referred to a special committee of the whole House, in order to amend our law so that a foreigner, in order to perform

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labour in Canada, must have his domicile in Canada. All along our frontier, Americans who sleep at home in the United States and eat breakfast there, may take their dinner with them and perform a day's labour in Canada, and go home again at night; while the same privilege is not accorded to Canadians who go there to work. Since introducing this Bill this session, I have received letters and petitions from labour organizations all over the country, complaining of this injustice. When it was first introduced, it appeared to have very few sympathisers in the House, but to-day hon. gentlemen on both sides have asked me if I intended to go on with it and press it to a conclusion this session. My answer has been, Yes. This is not a party question, and should not be treated as such: it is one to protect the workmen of Canada and should receive the support of both sides of the House. I have been promised that support, and I propose to press the Bill to a conclusion, if the majority of the House are favourable to it.

The PRIME MINISTER (Mr. Laurier). I fully acknowledge the great importance, or, at all events, the relative importance, of the Bill which has just been explained by my hon. friend from Leeds (Mr. Taylor). I must say at once that as far as the principle of the Bill is concerned, I think it is in some respects objectionable. It is certainly at variance with those views of public contracts and the comity of nations which should exist amongst civilized nations. On the other hand, I am fully conscious, also, that in all the border towns in Canada there is great discontent now prevailing, and prevailing with cause, as to the operation of the Alien Labour law which exists on the other side of the line. The principle of the law which exists on the other side of the line, is exactly the same as the principle of this Bill; in fact, the only reason which can be adduced by the hon. gentleman, or by anybody, for supporting such legislation, is that it is altogether of a retaliatory character. I suppose that my hon. friend would not press this Bill, if the American authorities were willing to withdraw their Bill. I must say that I quite agree with him that the character of the American legislation is very unfriendly and very offensive to us. It cannot be defended upon any principle that I know of. For my part, whenever I come into contact with gentlemen having any—I will not say authority on the other side—but having any view of their own on the legislation which prevails in that country, I have never failed to tell them that in my estimation this law is a blot upon the legislation of the United States. Well, if such a law is a blot on the legislation of the American nation, there is no escaping the conclusion that, if we adopt the same principle, we impose a similar blot upon our own legislation. It is true that people are sometimes constrained to do, in self-defence, things which they