

Canada Labour Code

tions, the corner grocers, to whom this piece of legislation will be detrimental.

There are still places where it is financially and physically impossible to grant the 40 hour week or the eight-hour working day. Will not Bill No. C-126 create more difficulties for these people, these small businessmen, the owners of corner stores? Is this legislation likely to preserve or safeguard the rights of the numerous small businessmen there are throughout the country? Mr. Chairman, those are the few remarks I wanted to make concerning clause 5 governing hours of work.

Until we finish considering the bill we will come back to other specific points, especially the matter of transportation, trucking companies and competition with which private industry is faced under the pretext that the government must absorb more and more deficits, while we make good these deficits with the money collected from private companies.

Mr. Chairman, I think the minister should consider very seriously, not only the clause concerning minimum wages, but also that concerning hours of work, to see whether it would not be preferable to let unions and employers discuss this matter of hours between themselves.

It seems to me that by so doing, we would respect the freedom of the employee, the freedom of the employer, the freedom of the union. A strait-jacket would not be imposed in any way on anybody.

As for minimum wages, I should like the minister to answer the question I asked him a little while ago; that is, whether winter works are considered as undertakings of the federal government and whether those who will take part in the carrying out of winter works in unincorporated parishes will enjoy the same benefits and the same advantages and will get \$1.25 an hour?

[Text]

Mr. Temple: Mr. Chairman, I wish to direct my remarks to subclause 1 of clause 5 of the bill in so far as this part affects railroaders, and when I refer to railroaders I have particularly in mind the running trades including engineers, firemen, trainmen and conductors.

The men in these trades are paid on a mileage basis rather than by the hour. There is a good reason for this arrangement. It is very difficult to estimate how long it will take a train to run from a certain point to another point, because this depends on whether it is a passenger, an express or a

[Mr. Caouette.]

manifest train. All of these factors must be taken into consideration to understand the difficulty, if not impossibility, of applying the provisions of clause 5 to the railway running trades.

What might often happen is that a freight train, not being a manifest train, travelling from Belleville to Scarborough, a distance of 100 miles, may take eight, nine or ten hours because of the amount of traffic on that main line, whereas a fast passenger train might make the same trip in two hours. Of course I realize that this time factor is averaged out during the course of the year because crews on freight trains will sometimes be operating fast through freights, but it is very difficult to state when the averaging out process will take place.

What could happen under the terms of this clause, although I am sure it will not, is that a crew operating a train on its way from Montreal to Brockville, for example, would use up the allotted time before completing the trip and under the terms of this legislation would then have to stop operating. As I have suggested, this will not happen because we will not allow our transportation systems to be tied up.

Perhaps I should not skip ahead, but I must state that I have had the opportunity of considering the amendments to clause 5, and feel very sure that the minister in his wisdom will not impose these hours of work when it is obvious that such an imposition would be prejudicial to the employees.

Mr. Chairman, I wanted to bring these facts to the attention of this committee because I feel sure that the railroad running trades merit consideration in respect of the application of the terms of clause 5 of this bill.

Mr. Thomas: Mr. Chairman, I sympathize with the purposes of this bill, which I understand is to spread more equitably the wealth of this country arising from our national productivity. However, I do feel we should approach this matter with caution because it will interfere somewhat with the status quo, and whenever we interfere with things of this kind we are bound to create some hardships, as well as afford some benefits.

Now, the act sets forth the standard hours and wages that shall apply to federal works, undertakings and businesses. On behalf of the feed dealers in our area, the local feed mills and elevator operators, I wish to raise a point. I assume in doing so, Mr. Chairman, that these people know what they are talking about. They feel that they are included