

9-10 EDWARD VII., A. 1910

*By Mr. Verville:*

Q. In the case of government work or anybody taking a contract with the government?—A. On government work.

*By The Chairman:*

Q. When the state wishes to enforce an eight-hour-day law it can either enact a straight eight-hour-day law or pass a law in the first place applying to public works and say that all the workmen in the employ of the contractor who engages men on any of these public works must work only eight hours. But if the federal government attempted to do that it would be invading, it seems to me, the jurisdiction of the several states or provinces in trying to regulate the hours of others than those who were working on government work directly?—A. I think that is probably the reason why it was felt desirable to make the law explicit.

*By Mr. Macdonell:*

Q. By inserting the words 'upon such work?'—A. Yes, 'upon such work.'

Mr. KNOWLES.—I cannot agree with Mr. Verville that it will be impossible for a contractor to put his employees at work upon two jobs. He could work them down town in the morning up to the luncheon hour and then give them another job for five hours on a government contract in the afternoon.

Mr. VERVILLE.—It is not a question of what they can do, but what they are obliged to do under existing conditions.

Mr. KNOWLES.—It will be a great temptation to do that if under this Bill full pay at the rate of ten hours is to be given.

Mr. VERVILLE.—There will be a great temptation on the part of the men, only to work for eight hours too. What you suggest would not be businesslike.

Prof. SKELTON.—The point came up in some of the hearings held by Congressional committees to consider proposed legislation.

Mr. MURRAY, representing the Manufacturers' Association.—I would like to ask whether under the New York law piece workers are required to be paid the same amount of wages per day or per week on the eight-hour basis as they formerly were on a basis of ten hours. To illustrate my point, let me refer to an operation in connection with the building trade. Riveters, I understand, are paid by the piece, so much per thousand rivets, and the union to which they belong fixes the price at which they will be paid. Would they now expect to receive the same compensation per day of eight hours as they formerly did on a ten-hour basis?

Prof. SKELTON.—You mean under the New York law?

Mr. MURRAY.—Yes.

Prof. SKELTON.—It expressly states that they shall receive the per diem rate of wages current in the trade, but if in a certain trade the wages are on a piece-work basis I should certainly think the law would require them to be given the prevailing piece-work rates.

Mr. MURRAY.—In that event the application of the law to riveters would result in a reduction of wages.

Prof. SKELTON.—I think that is quite conceivable.

The CHAIRMAN.—I did not ask permission of the committee in that instance in allowing Mr. Murray the privilege of asking a question because I felt that it was merely the one query he wished to put. I would like to know the wish of the committee on that point in regard to any gentleman appearing before us. I suppose that in all cases it would be by the courtesy of the committee that they should be allowed to ask questions.

Mr. KNOWLES.—I should think we would be all agreeable.

Mr. SMITH.—I think it is very proper.

Prof. SKELTON.