

important a bearing upon our national life, Who, Sir, shall be able to tell us what the importance of that bearing is? We have the future before us. We are a small country in point of population, we are a mighty country in point of resources. We have a million square miles of arable land; we can furnish 6,400,000 farms of 100 acres each to tillers of the soil; we can accommodate a population of from 75,000,000 to 100,000,000 and afford them the means of sustenance in this Dominion. We have not only this vast public domain of fertile area, but we have fisheries of boundless value, we have great timber resources, great mineral resources—we have all undeveloped resources that are necessary to build up a first-class power, and we are engaged to-day, in the business of laying the foundations of that future nation. Do we realize how important that function is? Do we realize what the future has to ask of us, to expect from us? Shall we quarrel here over little matters concerning division of spoils and railway subsidies, and whether we give two or three per cent more or less of protection to this man or that, and neglect laying the foundations of the future, on truth and justice, broad and strong in building up a great nation in Canada; and should we not stop to consider whether the provisions of the Bill now before the House are not provisions essential to secure the stability, the prosperity, the growth of the nation that we hope to build up on this northern half of the American continent? Sir, I solicit from the House the favourable, the candid consideration of this question. I ask the House to divest its mind of all prejudices in regard to this matter, to look at it, not from the standpoint of party politics, not to consider whether the promoter of this Bill has been on one side of the House or the other side of it, but to look at the measure itself, to weigh the consequences that will result from the adoption of this measure, to weigh the consequences that will result from the lack of a law of this kind, and, having considered these points, having arrived at a conclusion, as hon. members must necessarily do, that it is necessary to respect and stand by the safeguards of justice and truth, and to remember that the law which has been given for the good of man cannot be safely disregarded—remembering this I trust, Sir, that the House will give to the measure which I now propose not only its consideration, but its support.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. Speaker, I am not going to detain the House very long on this question, but I have a few words to offer. We all admit that this is an important question. Of course, it might be argued that sometimes when this matter is up for discussion, hon. members do not pay very much attention to it; but there may be reasons adduced for that attitude, and good reasons. As I look at this Bill, which is one presented to the House year after year, the first question that comes to my mind is this, is

it necessary? Now, I may say that I believe a great many members of this House think it is not necessary, and that it is one of the reasons why they pay very little attention to it. There is a great deal to be said in favour of the argument that this Bill is not necessary. There is no country on the face of the earth, and that is putting it strongly, and yet it is not putting it too strongly, where the Lord's Day is better observed than it is in the Dominion of Canada. We need not refer to the United States, because we all know about that country, and we need not refer to the countries of Europe; but I would venture to say that if we go to England and Ireland, or even to Scotland we would find that the Lord's Day is not as well observed in any of those countries as it is in this Dominion. That is a matter of great pride to us as Canadians; but, at the same time, that is, I admit, a strong argument in the mouths of those who say that a Bill of this nature is not necessary. But another question occurs to me—is this Bill practicable? That is to say, can a Bill be framed which will be workable? Now, what has been our experience in this House? A Bill for the better observance of the Lord's Day has been presented year after year, and has passed the second reading on almost every occasion, perhaps on every occasion, and yet when the Bill has got into Committee of the Whole, objections have been raised to one point and another which could not be answered by those who were in favour of the Bill, objections which could not be surmounted, and so the Bill has fallen through on account of those objections. It is not enough to say that the object of the Bill is a good one, but we have to ask ourselves whether a Bill can be framed that will not do injustice to any one and that will accomplish the objects aimed at. The expression of the House so far has been that it has been impossible to frame a Bill of that nature. So I think we may say that, so far as experience goes, we have not been able up to this time to frame a workable Bill on these lines.

Mr. CHARLTON. We have not tried one; we have not had such a law.

Mr. CRAIG. There is another point, a very important point, and it is as to the duty of this Parliament to pass such a measure. I have heard high authorities express the opinion that it is not our duty to do so. On one occasion, desiring to obtain some advice on this point, I asked an hon. member—and if I mentioned his name he would be recognized as a high authority—if it was the duty of Parliament to pass measures of this character, and he said the duty of passing such a Bill belongs to the provincial legislatures. I think in a great measure that is true. It is said there are some points touched upon by this Bill that are not under the control of the provincial legislature, but I think it will be found that a Bill to carry out