

entrust the disposal of this fund? Why, to that horny-handed son of toil, Senator McHugh.

Mr. KING. I would point out to the hon. member that Mr. O'Donoghue has nothing to do with the Department of Labour.

Mr. J. W. MADDIN (South Cape Breton). I am in favour of the principle of an eight hour day for the labouring classes. But I would like to point out that while the Bill now before us, on its face and by its title, purports to be an Act respecting the hours of labour on public works, it is an entirely different measure in its effect. The first section of this Bill reads:

Every contract to which the government of Canada is a party, which may involve the employment of labourers, workmen or mechanics, shall contain a stipulation that no labourer, workman or mechanic in the employ of the contractor or subcontractor, or other person doing or contracting to do the whole or a part of the work contemplated by the contract, shall be permitted or required to work more than eight hours in any one calendar day—

And so on. It was pointed out by the hon. member for South Wellington (Mr. Guthrie) that this Bill was likely to bring about the anomaly of some men in a workshop employed on government work working for eight hours a day while others in the same shop would be working for ten hours, and this, he said, might breed discontent. I cannot see, from a reading of the Bill, that such a condition could possibly arise. Under the Bill as I read it, the government contractor is not allowed to employ any one, whether on government work or any other work, for a period of more than eight hours in the twenty-four. The Bill does not restrict the hours of labour to eight for those in the employ of the contractors who are on government work, but it says that 'no labourer . . . in the employ of the contractor or sub-contractor' shall be so employed. If after the word 'sub-contractor' were added 'on the contract' one could understand that this Bill aimed at making the eight hours applicable to work done on the government contract. But as the Bill stands now, this case might arise: In some great industrial establishments, say a steel works, if the owner entered into a contract to furnish steel rails to the government, then, under this Bill, he could not employ his coachman, or the help round his own home, for more than eight hours a day. It seems to me that, as it stands at present, the Bill is impracticable. Let me point out for a moment the effect it would have, for instance, in the case of a certain industry in the riding which I have the honour to represent. We have there the works of the Dominion Iron and Steel Company which owns a line of steamships which carry iron

ore from Wabana and dolomite and limestone from Bras d'Or Lakes. If this Bill were in force, and the Dominion government should buy some steel rails from the Dominion Iron and Steel Company—they bought \$29,000 last year—then when one of the company's boats left Wabana for the port of Sydney with a cargo of iron ore, at the conclusion of an eight hour day they would have to drop anchor or seek the shelter of a port till next morning; or, a vessel coming from Marble Mountain with a cargo of dolomite would be obliged to do the same thing. Thus the Bill is impracticable to the employer and impracticable to the employed. I submit that the hon. member for Maisonneuve (Mr. Verville) might well act on the suggestion offered by the hon. member for South Toronto (Mr. Macdonell) and have this Bill referred to a committee with power to alter it and have it made practicable in operation.

Now, with regard to the general principle of an eight hour day, I wish to take issue with my hon. friend from East Grey (Mr. Sproule) who says that it is ridiculous, preposterous, and declares that it cannot be successfully demonstrated to him that a man can accomplish as much work in eight hours as in ten. I may say to the hon. member that the product is not the result alone of the time devoted to the labour but also of the skill and the vitality put into it by the workman. For instance, in the coal mines of Nova Scotia within recent years, they have introduced coal-mining machines which are worked by compressed air at a very high pressure. The air is taken in from the reservoirs at the pit bottom at about 900 pounds pressure to the square inch. It is conducted through the mines and used on these machines. A man is stretched out on his stomach at full length, grasping the handles of this powerful machine, weighing, perhaps, nine hundred or a thousand or even twelve hundred pounds, working, as I have said, at heavy pressure and pounding with a pick on the working face. There is a recoil that shakes and vibrates every part of the anatomy of the man operating the machine. It has been stated on apparently good authority that a man's working life devoted to the operating of such machinery, even at eight hours per day, is only five or six years on the average. People of high-strung, nervous dispositions operating machinery of this kind would break down more quickly than those less nervously constituted.

Mr. SPROULE. May I ask the hon. member: Is not that exactly what I said? In some lines of life eight hours would be a long day, but in others it would not be a long day.

Mr. MADDIN. That is what the hon. member for East Grey (Mr. Sproule) said at one point of his remarks. But he said