

we should carefully consider all the circumstances and get all the light possible. I would not undertake to dispute the arguments advanced by the hon. member for South Toronto and the hon. member for South Wellington (Mr. Guthrie), who are, of course, well informed on the legal aspects of this question. On the contrary, I think it would be in the interest of the Bill itself that we should move very carefully. Should any mistake be made, instead of advancing the interests of labour, which, of course, is the object sought by the introducer of the Bill, the very purpose in view might be defeated. Therefore, I think the suggestion made by these gentlemen was a very wise one—that we should carefully weigh all the facts in this case, so that when we place a measure of this kind on the statute-book it may be one that we are sure will be of advantage to working men generally and will be accepted by all fair-minded men as promoting the best interest of all classes.

Mr. JOSEPH TURCOTTE (Quebec). (Translation). Mr. Speaker, the matter which has been brought to the attention of the House suggests a few remarks. In the first place, I notice that this Bill which, on a previous occasion, was submitted to the House but at the time did not reach the committee stage, is this year introduced earlier. That is an improvement which I am happy to note and which, I think, portends a better outcome to this proposed legislation.

It has been contended by opponents of the measure that its enforcement would be objectionable. For instance, it has been alleged that, should this Bill be carried, it would result in serious inconvenience to contractors on government public works now under contract, as said contractors could no longer expect a ten-hour day on the part of their men, but only an eight-hour day. They would thus find themselves in a disadvantageous position, since they would get only eight hours' work for ten hours' pay. That may be so, but let me say that there are precedents to legislation of this kind, and I have no hesitation in saying that to my mind this is a desirable change.

We have in the civil service, for instance, men whose work is pretty much, if not entirely, the same as that carried on by men engaged in commercial and industrial pursuits; nevertheless, we find that their hours of work are different, that their day's work is much shorter than in the case of people doing such outside work. Now, who, thinks of complaining of this? Nobody, to my knowledge. True, the government official may be called upon to do more work, to show greater efficiency, to expend greater energy, to bring greater powers to bear on his work, and that may justify the re-

quirement of shorter hours from him. We are satisfied with shorter hours from our government officials, but we require from them greater concentration of the mind and more rapid work.

Now, I think that this precedent to be found in the management of the various departments, might well have its counterpart in manual occupations. For I understand that the hon. member for Maisonneuve (Mr. Verville) voices here the views of the working classes in general, of men in all the various trades and handicrafts. Considering that an exception is made in favour of the civil servant, why should not a similar measure of relief be extended to that class of people who, while getting a living through what is actually manual labour, are performing duties quite similar to those of some public servants. As a matter of fact, I take it that there is a close connection between the mental work carried on in various departments, and the manual labour effected on behalf of those same departments.

I understand that this Bill is not taken exception to on strictly technical grounds; at any rate, I am not aware of any contention to that effect. Now, is such legislation desirable? That is a moot question under many skies. Experiments have been made and in some cases have turned out favourably, as stated by the honourable member who preceded me. Why should we not undertake ourselves some such tests? I stated a precedent, there are others. It is known that the men in the service of the Department of Marine at Quebec work nine hours a day in summer and eight hours in winter. Of course, there is a cut in the wages in winter time. That is a practical application of the system advocated by the hon. member for Maisonneuve. In all business and industrial establishments in Quebec, the working hours are from seven or eight o'clock in the morning to five or six o'clock in the evening. However, in the government workshops the men work eight hours only, and nobody finds fault with the practice. So, I am satisfied that, if no exception can be taken on technical grounds to the stand of the hon. member for Maisonneuve, the government should put his system to a practical test with a view of drawing conclusions. Several hon. members who have spoken previously against this proposal, are to my mind more anxious to forward the interests of employers rather than those of the working men. Fundamentally, it is always the same story; the unceasing struggle going on between labour and capital, between the employed and the employer. There are certain views which are held tenaciously by the employer and which the latter strives to uphold. But there is also the viewpoint of the workingman, which he is equally entitled to hold, and